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A MODEL OF Church-Government:

OR,

The GROUNDS of the Spirituall Frame and Government of the House of GOD.

Shewing,

What the *holy Scriptures* have therein delivered;
What the best *Reformed Churches* do practise;
What the *Tender Consciences* may rest in.

For the better Satisfaction of such as scruple at the Work of REFORMATION, declared and appointed by severall Ordinances of PARLIAMENT.

BY

JOHN DURY, one of the *Assembly of Divines*;
Who hath travelled heretofore in the work of Peace among the CHURCHES.

PSAL. 2. 6. *I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.*
ISA. 9. 6, 7. *The government shall be upon his shoulder, &c.*

April 10 LONDON,
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A

MODEL

OF

Church-Government

OR,

The Constitutions of the Spiritual Frame and Government of the Houſe of GOD.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE
RIGHT HONORABLE
Sr. John Gayer, Kt.
Lord Major of the City of *London*,
And to the Right Worshipfull,
The ALDERMEN and SHERIFFS
his Brethren.

Right Honourable:

These Scriptural Assertions, at their first conception, were not designed for the Publique; they were only put to Paper at the desire of those, who in this City gave me a call to the Cure of their soules, and were willing to reform their wayes according to the will of God. And because they did confesse their ignorance of the whole Frame and Government of the House of GOD; my aime was to let them see it, as briefly as I could, in a Model taken from the patern which I have seen in the Mount, which the Scriptures have revealed.

I would not be large, of purpose, to the end that I might stirre them up the more to Meditation, to the searching of the Scriptures, from which I have endeavoured to gather all; and to conference with my self,

when they ſhould be at a ſtand. I intended nothing, but according to their deſire to give them private ſatisfaction; yet they would not reſt there, but inſiſted to engage me to publiſh theſe Heads of thoughts (for in effect they are no more:) Nor was it enough to make them publike, but they would have me to owne them, and to preſent you alſo with them. To all which you may perceive that I have condeſcended, although I confeſſe with much reluctancie.

Not that I am aſhamed to owne any thing that is mine, though ſo imperfect as this is, and in a matter of ſo great conſequence, (for I am very well conſcious to mine own weakneſſe, and not unwilling that others ſhould perceive it, (if it may be for their edification) or that I was doubtfull of any Truth here delivered, (for I conceive that all may be made out to the full, if God ſhould give time, and a call to do it) but that I was loth to offer unto all whom I could not know, that which I had deſigned only for a few, whom in caſes of miſtake I would be able to rectifie. I was unwilling to ſeem to intermeddle to ſo little purpoſe, as theſe Tracts are like to be, in matters of ſo high concernment, in a ſeaſon ſo full of diſtraction, and in an Age ſo willing to cenſure, ſo apt to miſtake, and ſo ready to miſconſtrue on all hands every thing that hath no character of partiality upon it, though done never ſo harmleſly: And then alſo I was afraid to be thought to ſtretch my ſelfe beyond my line, in making this addreſſe unto You. But I hope that your favourable acceptance, and the Relation which I have to a particular Congregation in the City, will free me from this laſt apprehenſion; and from the former I have been taken off, partly by the conſideration of greater inconveniences which might follow upon the

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not yeelding, then upon the yeelding unto a publication; partly by the importunity of the Call which *I* received to do what here is done. So that *I* hope none other construction will be made of the publication of these Notions than ought in charity to be made; which is to believe, That *I* being earnestly desired to declare my knowledge of the truth of these matters, thought my self bound to beare witnes thereunto, and to suffer my testimony to come to the light, that it might appeare that these works are done in God, that they are free from humane respects; and that my aim in putting them forth, is to give occasion to men conscionably peaceable, to consider whether yea or no, an agreement in these Truths ought not to oblige Brethren to a neerer conjunction of spirits, & profession of unity, then we as yet are come unto? and whether yea or no, the things wherein there is a difference of opinion, deserve so much distance in affections, as many are fallen into, or ought to be debated in such a way of heat as most men follow, whereby they rather disturbe then edifie one another. It is a sad thing to see men that are called Christians and Brethren, exercising their wits to the disparagement of one another in Religious matters; and to deale with things concerning Conscience, lightly, passionately, and without all serious and conscionable gravity. These things are to be deplored, but cannot be redressed, without the acknowledgement of the Truth; nor can the Truth be received without the spirit of Love and Peace, which the Word of the Gospel doth administer only.

The Lord of truth and peace reveal the same unto us all more and more; and direct You in your station to walk therein as patterns of Righteousnes before all others. Which, with the wishes of prosperity unto the settlement of this whole State; shall be towards the LORD who alone is able to save, the constant Prayer of

Your HONOURS *most humble*
and affectionate servant in Christ,
JOHN DURY.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A PREFACE
To the Christian and unpartiall Reader.

Christian Reader,

SEeing I am put upon the publishing of these brief Tracts, I will endeavour by this Preface unto thee to make the best use thereof that I can, both for mine own comfort, and for the building up of others.

As for my self; I shall be comforted in this, (whatsoever others may judge of the matter) that I see cleerly a Providence in this publication, without any purpose of mine: And that I can conceive of the things which I judge therein to be imperfections, that they may prove advantages unto Gods main work in his way of using them; For the brevity of each Part may, to an intelligent Reader, make the whole so much the more commendable; and to one that is of no quick understanding, although it will be more obscure, yet it will also be lesse tedious; and may give to him that is ingenious, occasion to make some further inquiry after the Truth, that his rationall Doubts may be satisfied; which, as God shall enable me with grace, I shall be willing to intend.

As concerning others; seeing the spirits of most men are very sharp, and full of jealousies, I shall therefore offer my self unto them with the greater simplicity; for being in my self without prejudice, I hope to be found towards all without occasion of offence; and as I shall be voyd of partiality, so I shall make use of that liberty which in a businesse of this nature doth beseem my profession in the Gospel; which is, to look upon all alike, to be free in the matter, and plain in speeches, to utter the Truth as it is in my heart.

First then, I think my self bound to declare this; That I am under a Vow to prosecute upon all occasions, as long as I live, the Wayes of Evangelical reconciliation amongst PROTESTANTS; *that is to say, Professedly to seeke, and upon all occasions offered to advance, amongst those that have received the Holy Scriptures for their Rule, and keep to the Fundamentals of Faith and Practice, the*

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means of ſpirituall unity, of peace and of love, by the manifeſtation of the truth, and in the duties of holy Communion. Having therefore this opportunity fairly offered; I am obliged, in minding my Vow, to diſcharge a good Conſcience; and for the love which I owe unto the Goſpel of Peace, to the whole Church of God, and to the proſperity and flouriſhing condition thereof in this Nation, to make ſome Overtures, which I hope ſhall give no matter of grievance unto any, but will prove edifying unto all; at leaſt my aim ſhall be none other, but to ſtir up thy pure minde (Chriſtian Reader) to the thoughts of Brotherly kindneſſe, of meekneſſe, and of peace; to the end that ſome wayes may be taken up, which will help to reconcile the Affections of many divided about Circumſtantials; to preſerve and keep entire the Unity which remains about Fundamentals; and to prevent or cure the manifold Miſpriſions, which increaſe our confuſions, and obſtruct the Remedies of our diſeaſes.

The ſcope of the Preface.

Now to offer at this, I ſhall not cry out againſt particular faults; not becauſe I think them not very hurtfull to the wayes of Reformation, or that I think it unlawfull in due time and place, or altogether unuſefull to warne all of publike dangers, when none other Remedies are left: But I ſhall not do it, becauſe it is more ſutable to my ſpirit to ſeek to gain all to the ſenſe of neceſſary Duties, than to reprove ſome for the neglect thereof; becauſe my reſolution is to follow (if it be poſſible) the rule of Charity; firſt to admoniſh a Brother in private, before his faults be charged upon him in publike; and becauſe I find it the Theme of many, on all ſides, that do almoſt nothing elſe: And yet this courſe doth prove no lenitive, but rather an incentive to our diſtempers. My way then ſhall be, 1. To repreſent as briefly as I can, the generall danger which hangeth over all our heads by reaſon of our common faults. 2. To diſcover the cauſes whence our danger doth originally proceed. And 3. to offer at ſome counſel, which may point at a way to prevent the lamentable conſequence which is like to enſue, if no courſe be found and followed for healing of our breaches.

The parts of it.

First concerning the danger wherein we are, thus in brief:

That we amongſt our ſelves, almoſt in reſpect of every thing, are all broken to peeces in our affections, is very evident.

That in this rupture of affections there is not only a diſtance of parties, but much heat of oppoſition, no man can deny.

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That by this heat, the alienations and thoughts of heart grow daily greater and greater, every one can perceive.

That few set themselves in the gap, and labour to make up breaches, all must confesse.

And by reason of all this, (if the cause of our unsettlement continue long) that we shall be habituated unto Breaches, even till we be consumed, none can justly doubt, but every one should sadly apprehend: because the saying of our Lord and Saviour is undeniably true, That every Kingdom divided against it self is brought to desolation; and every City and House divided against it self, shall not stand, *Mat.*12.23. *If then I may parallel the universall state of* Protestancie, *as it is opposite to* Poperie, *unto a Kingdome; and the Nationall Churches thereof, unto so many Cities; and the severall Congregations of each city, unto so many Houses; and in all these, if I reflect upon the Breaches which are apparent unto all; First between the* Lutherans *and the* Reformed Churches, *which have brought them both from a flourishing, to a desolate condition, in* Germany: *Secondly between each of these within themselves, by their Sub-divisions and crosse Parties, which have weakned all their strength, and multiplied scandals amongst them: I must needs confesse, that Christs sentence is verified upon them; and that the judgement which of old was denounced and executed against* Israel, *is now come to passe in part upon the* Protestant Churches, *and may be accomplished over them all, if the Causes thereof be not taken away by true repentance. Let us briefly consider what the Prophet* Amos, *in his sixt chapter, saith unto* Israel, *that we may apprehend therein our own danger. First he denounceth a heavy woe unto those that were at their ease in Zion, and were not grieved at the affliction of* Joseph; *namely,* That they should be led away captive with the first that go captive. *v.*1. *till* 7. *Captivity then is threatned unto all, but chiefly unto these. Then he sheweth the certainty of this judgement, with the means by which, and the chief causes for which it should be brought to passe. The certainty of the Judgement is declared,* v. 8, 9, 10. *namely, that God had sworne by himself, that he did abhorre their excellency and hate their palaces, that he would deliver up the City and all that was in it to the enemies thereof, and that he would kill with death such as remain after the captivity in the city, although there should be but ten men remaining in one house.*

The meanes by which, and the causes for which this heavy Judgement should be thus executed, are set forth in vers. 11, 12, 13, 14. *The means are two: He would divide them within themselves,* v. 11. *and he would bring a forraign Nation against them to afflict them,* v. 14. *The causes are chiefly two; their incorrigiblenesse in unrighteousnesse,* v. 12. *and their pride in their own strength,* v. 13. *All these things are considerable in our present case: For this is evident; although the Church of God is heavily afflicted every where, and the Saints throughout the world have great cause to mourn, yet that most of us take our ease, and rest contented in the enjoyment of our Victories, and that we grieve for nothing in effect but because we have not all our Will accomplished against the adverse party with whom we are in contest about particular concernments; and as for other things besides, we are secure and careless, we take our pleasures to the full without restraint, and we grieve not at the affliction of* Joseph, *but in effect we do even as* Josephs *brethren did, they sate down to eat bread when they had cast their Brother into a pit,* Gen. 37. 24, 25. *So we who heretofore have helped to bring our Brethren of the* Palatinate *and of* France, *into the Pit wherein at this day they sit; now being at our ease, we minde not at all their interests. If then our sinne is the same with that of* Israel, *to seek our pleasure and ease, and to enjoy it to the full so far as we have gotten it; certainly our punishment will be the same with theirs also: for God hath as just cause to sweare that he doth abhorre our excellencie and hate our paluces, as he did theirs; and he hath no lesse power now to punish this Nation with captivity and mortality, then he had heretofore to punish that: And to me it is apparent, that he hath set the same Means awork, and for the same Causes, against us now, which then were threatned against them. Against them the Prophet threatned, saying,* Behold the Lord commandeth; and he will smite the great house with
v. 11. breaches, and the little house with clefts: *that is, he will divide you, and break your strength to peeces; for, saith he,* Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen? for ye have turned judgement into gall, and the fruit of righteousnesse
v. 12. into hemlock. *That is, You must be broken to peeces, because you cannot otherwise be made subject and usefull unto Gods service; for you are hardned in your sinnes like a rock, upon which*

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the ſpirit of God cannot run and have a free paſſage: Nor can you be manured as a profitable husbandry unto him, by his ordinary Miniſtry, which is appointed to plow up your fallow-ground, becauſe you are not capable of being plowed by reaſon of your ſtony heart, which is ſo hardned in the Wayes of iniquity, that you have turned Judgement into gall, and the fruit of Righteouſneſſe into hemlock. Moreover, you rejoyce in a thing of nought, *and you boaſt your ſelves of your ſtrength, ſaying, that* you have taken horns *(power to defend and aſſault)* by your own ſtrength: *therefore,* behold ſaith the Lord God of hoſts, I will raiſe up againſt you, O houſe of Iſrael, a Nation, and they ſhall afflict you, from the entring in of Hamath, unto the river of the wilderneſſe. *This is that which was denounced and executed againſt* Iſrael; *this we ſee hath been the caſe of the Proteſtant Churches in* Germanie; *and may we not now ſay unto* England, *or to* Great Britain *in like manner, to this ſame effect*——

By horſes, Gods ſpirit is typified, Zach. 1. 8, 9, 10. compar'd with c. 6. v. 2, 3, 4, &c.

By oxen, the Miniſters of the Word are typified, 1 Cor. 9. 9, 10, 11. v. 13.

Behold the Lord hath commanded in the way of his Juſtice, an evill ſpirit of Diviſion to appeare amongſt you; for he hath ſmitten your great houſes with breaches, and your little houſes with clefts; there are diviſions and ſubdiviſions amongſt you at home, by which he doth fit you for the ruine which is determined againſt you from abroad, and all by reaſon of your other ſinnes wherein you are hardened; for you pervert Juſtice, and cannot be reformed: becauſe you truſt to the power and ſtrength which you have gotten to your ſelves, therefore God will bring from abroad enemies againſt you, who ſhall afflict you, as heretofore hath been done to others; Except you feare the Lord, and his goodneſſe by which he doth yet ſpare you, and be ſo wiſe as to prevent this Judgement with ſpeedy Repentance.

In reſpect of God, this is the danger under which we lie. In reſpect of Men, all the foundations of the earth, all grounds of ſettlement, all Rules of government, are ſhaken and out of frame. For if we look upon our ſelves in reſpect of that which is within: How little care and compaſſion there is of the Poor, of the oppreſſed and afflicted; how impoſſible it is to expedite the wayes of relief for them; how ready they are to break forth into tumults and diſcontents: How little faithfulneſſe and truſt there is to be found amongſt men that are called Brethren; how ſecure we are of the event

event of our Diviſions; how eagerly moſt men are carried to proſecute the deſignes of a Party, without regard to the Publike; how many croſſe Intereſts are proſecuted by oppoſite Parties in the State, which obſtruct all proceedings: How the Church is broken to peeces within it ſelf, and in the very Principles of a true ſettlement; how that which is called the preſent Church, is clogged and obſtructed in the way of Reformation, and in the aime and meanes to compaſſe it, is diſtant from the authority by which it is to be ſupported; and how that which ſeems to be eſtabliſhed, is ſet upon a ſandy foundation. If (I ſay) we look upon theſe things within, and then in reſpect of that which is without, we take notice of the diſtance at which we ſtand from the reſt of the beſt Reformed Churches, and of the Judgement which they make of our proceedings. (I ſay) if all this be laid together, as to Man; every one that hath eyes, muſt needs foreſee our inevitable ruine, if we continue thus; and that it is impoſſible for us to ſubſiſt long in this condition.

Cleer it is, That if every one be left in his outward and publike wayes to the liberty of his own Will, to croſſe and oppoſe his neighbour, and affront him as he pleaſeth; that we ſhall need none other enemy to deſtroy us beſides our ſelves.

But if now in the middeſt of our unſettlements, many enemies take their advantage to watch over us to cauſe us halt; if they blow dililigently the coals of our diviſions, ſupporting themſelves only with this hope, that the flame which is kindled amongſt us, will at laſt burne us up to aſhes, and that they may yet triumph over us therein; And if few do either obſerve their wayes to diſcover them, or endeavour by faithfull counſel to ſhut the door upon them; then we may infallibly conclude, that our deſolation will not only be certainly, but ſpeedily accompliſhed. And this is the danger wherein I conceive we all are at this time.

Now before we can ſpeak of the Remedies, we muſt look a little into the Cauſes, whence theſe ſymptomes of our ruinous eſtate proceed.

Of the cauſes of our publike evils.

I ſhall not rake into all the particulars that might be obſerved, nor lay all the guilt upon any one: It is an eaſie matter to accuſe Adverſaries; and a very naturall courſe, to make ſuch as we do not love, odious unto others. But this is a way wherein narrow

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spirits walk; and men, as men, seeke rather to justifie themselves before the world, then to reclaim with meekneſſe others from the error of their wayes before God. But I shall look to this last duty in the first place; and then let the other come as it may, if need be, that is, in case I find my self suspected or accused wrongfully. Nor shall I meddle with matters of State, to impute the causes of our misery to the miscarriages of Publike designs, or to the perverſnes of the counsels, or the wickednes of the Instruments thereof. It is no part of my calling, to trace Polititians in the crooked & serpentine wayes wherein they walk. The Interest of States is a troubled Sea full of hideous Monsters, and hidden Rocks, whereupon the men of this world make shipwrack; and therein all the Nations and great Families of the earth are tossed up and down according to the fancies of the Rulers, whose aime (though under other pretences) is nothing else but greatneſſe and command, to be supported by riches and power: My soule enter thou not into their counsel, for there is no truth in their wayes, there is no faithfulneſſe in their mouth, their inward part is very wickedneſſe: And that our distractions proceed from this generation of men, and from the Counsels which are taken up upon their Principles, there is no question to be made. But I shall leave them unto God, to be judged in his own time; And walking in mine own sphere, shall speake unto thee that art a Christian indeed, of things belonging to our Religious profession; to discover at the root the causes of our disease; which I conceive is nothing else but the corrupt Profession of the true Religion, whereof we must all confeſſe our selves guilty, every one of us, more or leſſe: Which how to Reform, first in our selves, and then in others, will be a profitable enquiry.

If the Truth had not been manifested unto us, we should have no sinne; but now since we have known it, and held the profession of it in unrighteouſneſſe, we have no cloak for our sinne: We ought then to confeſſe and deplore that our profession is corrupted, two wayes. First, that most of us, although we are not ignorant of the Truth; yet we cannot deny but that we have loſt the true aime of the holy profession thereof. Secondly, that although some aimes be rightly set, and the profession of many commendable; yet for the most part, the means and wayes of prosecuting the same, are either

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not answerable unto the Rules of Christianity, or else directly destructive thereunto.

What the aim of our profession is, and how we fail of it.

The true aime of the Holy profession is, to shew forth unto this evill world, the life and vertues of him who hath called us unto his Kingdome and glory. The Truth which we know, and which by the Gospel is revealed unto us, is the testimony of Jesus; that in him alone there is Redemption from all sinnes; that by him alone there is all sufficiencie of Grace to be received through Faith; that for his sake alone wee have free accesse by the Spirit unto the Father; that the titles and names of King, Captain, and Forerunner, of Apostle, Prophet and High Priest, of Author and Finisher of our salvation, do belong to him alone: and that he being alone the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man can come to the Father but by him; this we do know and acknowledge; this wee doe maintaine and professe as the Truth: but who can say that the true aime of this profession, is taken up and followed as it ought to be? this aime is to follow him as deare children, expressing him in his life, that is, in his lowly, just, holy, and unblameable conversation amongst men; and in his death; that is, in his mortified, his self-denying, his afflicted, his meeke and humble condition in this world. I say, this aime is not taken up and maintained in this profession of the Truth; yet we know that this should be our whole aime; and because we know it, and doe it not, therefore our sinne is heavy upon us; therefore these judgements doe overtake us, and God doth revenge the quarrel of his Covenant against us; The Covenant is, that wee being in Christ shall beare his Crosse, and follow him; that we shall suffer together, and be separate from the world with him; and if wee touch not the uncleane things thereof, we have a promise that the Father will receive us. But who is it that doth truly aime at a full separation from the world, and doth not intend to uphold the high things and full enjoyments thereof together with the profession of the Truth? are We not content, and have We not a desire to enjoy the fashion of things present, although wee know that we are called to seeke and apprehend onely the things to come? wee are called to be conformable unto the image of the Sonne of God; that is, to be ne mayes conformable

Matth. 16. 24. Rom. 8. 17. 2 Cor. 6. 17.

mable unto this World: but if we mind no such thing, how can we be said to maintaine the true aime of our holy profession? The Socinians who have cast off the Truth which is in Christ Jesus concerning our Justification before God, and have made the acknowledgement of his Person in the Truth, void, by their Heresies; these uphold still the aime of the profession, namely, that wee must follow his foot-steps: but wee who are convicted of the truth which they have denied, seeme to deny (at least in our practise) that which they uphold; and consequently make the truth it selfe which we acknowledge, ineffectuall, by our profession thereof; because our aime is not in simplicity answerable, but rather crosse in all appearance unto the tenour of the new Covenant, and the end of our heavenly calling. Now if the maine and principall aime be lost in our walking with God; how can he be at peace with us, or we with him? can two walke together except they be agreed? and are those agreed whose aimes are different? doth not hee know the secrets of all hearts, that he may reward every one according to his works? what then can we expect from him other, then to reap the fruit of the seed which we sowe? for we sow to the flesh worldly aimes in the field of a religious profession; and can we expect any other harvest from thence but trouble and confusion? This then is the first and maine cause of all our distractions, that the true aim of our Profession is for the most part lost amongst us.

The second cause of our publike distraction is this; that although for the maine, a worke of Reformation is truly aimed at by some; and many particular matters tending thereunto, are rightly designed by many, for the advancement of Religion: yet the meanes to bring this aime and these designes to passe, are not at all proportionate to the effect intended thereby. The work of Reformation (no doubt heartily aimed at by some) is a reall and thorough purging of the Church and State from the corruptions which have overgrowne the one and the other, and a settlement of both in a way of Righteousnesse: I say that some aime heartily at this; and I truly doe beleeve it; but how many there are, God alone doth know. Sure I am wee cannot discerne very many, that have nothing else in their aime; but that most men, are very fierce in their private, and very cold

What the Reformation aimed at is, and why we come short of it.

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in the publike occasions, wee can easily discern; and yet their Covenant both With God and man doth otherwise oblige them. And would to God there were not some that did make the aime of a Religious Reformation, a meere pretence to compasse their owne worldly ends: and a snare to entrap others into difficulties. I shall not meddle with the State, the Church is my taske at this time; but I finde, that to advance this Reformation in both, the meanes used are very disproportionate to the effect, not only in respect of the way, wherein many of the Reformers Walke in their own thoughts, but also in respect of their manner of concurrence every one with another.

The way wherein most men walke in their thoughts to Reforme the State, hath no relation unto Christianity, but onely to the wisdome of the world; and the Way by which they seeke to reforme the Church, hath as little relation unto Charity, but is either carried in the way of Liberty, or of Authority; for men walke by one Rule of Prudencie in State matters, and by another in Church affaires: as if a Christion in his civill employments might act Without a Relation unto the will of Christ; or in Church-matters, might either please himself alone, without a relation to his Brethren, or might use all the power Whereunto he can pretend, without a compliance and condescension to the weak. These false Principles of Reformation, make men inconsistent with themselves both in Church and State: here they act one Way by this Rule, and there another way by that Rule, and sometimes they jumble both wayes together, and look at once with two faces in the same businesse different wayes. The simplicity and truth of Christianity is by this meanes lost in the Aim, and with it all true Prudencie in the Deliberation; and these two being gone, men are left unto the counsell of their own hearts, and betake themselves in the execution of their designes, as well in the one as the other sphere, to the tricks and contrivements of Policie, or to main power and strength. And thus it falls out, that even the best and most hearty Reformers, walking as Men, in spirituall undertakings, fall into different wayes, take up different Maximes and Rules; and acting according to the same, (because they respect not the Maximes and Rules of holy Communion in Christianity) they make use of all their strength and

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wit to oppose one another by different contrivements about the same Work: And whiles they are wholly bent and possessed (as men naturally are) with the thoughts and affections of their own way and designment; they look upon others, no more as upon Christians, but as upon a Party: Because the simplicity of the Holy Profession being lost in the Aime, and the Rules of Holy Prudencie for the Communion of Saints, being laid aside in the work; and men having forgotten that they are called to be Brethren, and members of one another, in their relation to Christ; they act no more in this, (though otherwise godly men, and hearty towards a Reformation) as men of godlinesse, and truly reformed from the world, but as men interessed in a Party of the world; for such or such a Designe; to gain, or to oppose this or that Purpose. And because this frame of spirit even in the best of us all (if we look not carefully to our spirits) may be found more or lesse; therefore the Meanes of our Reformation are disproportionate unto the End for which they are undertaken; and this, because they are not put forth by us in Gods way, which alone can edifie his Church, and without which no designe therein can prosper.

Now when the Authours of our Reformation act thus, and are acted by a Principle of Division within themselves; how can they be brought to a hearty concurrence one with another, except a way can be found to rectifie this Fundamentall error in every one of them? And if the Instruments who are to put life in the Meanes of the Reformation, either cannot at all joyn, or if without their conjunction nothing at all can be effected to any purpose for a settlement; how shall the work be carried on? If Christ would not have his own Nation to come to perfection without us; sure he will not have any one of us come to perfection without another. If then the Agents who are to work out the Perfection whereat we aim, are so far from joyning in it, as that they prove by their conjunction rather destructive to one another, then furtherers of Gods Work; what hope is there of any successe? Christian Reader, give me leave without offence to speak plainly What is observed in the Actors of a Reformation at this time, I mean such who have the meanes thereof in their hand, or at least a hand in the meanes; These we may finde to be of three sorts:

Some minde the Work ſincerely for it ſelf, although they now and then miſtake the Rules by which they ſhould Walk; Some mind the work, only to gain ſome temporall advantages by it; And ſome minde it only to ſpie the faults, and ſtop the proceedings of the Actors. Now if our conſtitution be ſuch, that nothing can be done effectually in the Publike, without ſome of each ſort of theſe Agents, whenſoever they liſt to have a hand in the buſineſſe: it is apparent that no meanes can be imployed ſuccesfully towards the thorough Reformation of any thing. For the Upright man failing (as we all do) to walk by his Rule (which is his ſtrength) he eaſily is drawn by the Worldling into a Plot, to do things for ſome End which is not anſwerable to the ſimplicity of the Goſpel; and aſſoon as any ſuch thing is in agitation, the third Agent, who is alſo intereſſed in State-contrivements, ſteps in to obſerve and obſtruct or overthrow their proceedings: And hence it is that the means of an intended Reformation, well meant by many, and ſet afoot by ſome, are unſuccesfull in the event, becauſe in the proceedings and uſe of Meanes there is no ſutableneſſe, but rather a deſtructive quality unto the advancement of Religion. For in every thing that is propoſed or taken in hand, the jealouſie of a Party doth come in, which over-ruling the Affections by worldly conſiderations, raiſeth an endleſſe conteſt about every thing concerning every part and circumſtance of the work; by which means the deſigne, though never ſo juſt and harmleſſe in it ſelf, is either ſtifled in the conception, or elſe becomes abortive before the time of ſtrength; or a birth of ſo long continuance, that in end there is no ſtrength left to bring it forth. And this is briefly my thought of the Cauſes why the main work of our Reformation is ſo much perplexed as we finde it. As for more particular matters honeſtly deſigned for the advancement of Religion, by many, in their ſeverall places and callings; As they can have but little influence upon the main, becauſe the great corner-ſtones of the Reformation, are not as yet publikely profeſſed and laid, upon which every one ſhould make an orderly ſuperſtructure of gold and ſilver and precious ſtones, in the unity of the ſpirit towards his Brethren: So, the more ſuch Deſignes are ſtood upon and advanced in a private courſe, they accidentally become the

greater

greater hinderances to the generall work; whiles men that are thereby ſtinted within themſelves, reſt ſatisfied in their own private wayes; and by leaving the thoughts of a publike Communion, they prove oppoſites thereunto; When they admit of nothing that is not every way agreeable unto their particular Contrivements.

I am perſwaded that many able men throughout the Kingdome have many excellent things in readineſſe, which might be uſefully applied to the edification of the Churches, both for the advancement of Knowledge and of Godlineſſe, if the Wayes of our Settlement were cleared. But now as matters ſtand, I cannot look otherwiſe upon their excellencies, but as upon the ſcattered ſtones of a building not yet framed, and as upon the furniture of a houſe whoſe model is neither apparent, nor yet well underſtood by any. Therefore although there be many men in theſe Churches of eminent abilities, and Veſſels of great honour, fit for very good uſes in the building of this Tabernacle: yet becauſe the Rule and way of their Brotherly communion and correſpondencie is not determined as it ought to be, they ſtand (though in their private ſphere profitable as to God, yet) as to the Church uſeleſſe in the Communion of Saints. For the Parts of the building not being ſet together, their ſerviceable gifs are not imployed as Joints ſhould be in the Body to make up and compact the whole: And for want of this aime and endeavour, by all that they do, they bring nothing forth unto perfection.

I have briefly pointed at the Cauſes of our Diſeaſe; that thou mayeſt conſider thy ſelf (Chriſtian Reader) as in the preſence of God, how thou art led, by what ſpirit thou art guided, and how thou ſhouldeſt free thy ſelf from the guilt of contributing further any cauſe or matter of continuance to our Diſtempers. Now the Lord grant us all grace, to do all things without murmurings & diſputings, to his glory, unblameably in Love. Amen.

I am in the laſt place to ſpeak of the Remedies of this corrupt Profeſſion of the true Religion: And if I ſhould enter at large upon this task, I ſhould be obliged to write a Volume: but my purpoſe is only to name the Heads of things neceſſary to be intended and ſet a-work, to advance our Reformation, and redreſſe the Evils which threaten our finall ruine; That if thou (Chriſtian Reader) art convicted of the uſefulneſſe thereof, thou mayeſt contribute in thy way what thou canſt thereunto.

Of the remedies of our publick distractions.

The remedies then of our distracted condition I conceive will bee found in a discovery of two things, first of that which will helpe to rectifie the disease at the root, by taking away the cause which doth originally beget it; Secondly of that which will helpe to prevent the effects thereof; which become causes of increasing the distempers, to propagate and continue the disease.

The Remedie of the first cause of our disease.

I have shewed my opinion that the causes which beget our distempers, are the want of the true aime in the holy profession, and the disproportionatnes of the meanes used to prosecute the true and lawfull aimes of the Reformation which wee seeke to rectifie the inward Hypocrisie of the heart is only Gods worke; but to discover it and convict mens consciences of it, may be the worke of his servants by the right interpretation and application of the word, as the Apostle testifieth, 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. *Yet the bare discovery of vice or error and the conviction of a naturall man that hee is guilty of it, is not enough to remedie the evill disposition of his spirit or to beget a true aime in him to answer the heavenly call; nothing can doe this but God by the discovery of the truth in the lovelinesse thereof; When hee giveth faith to the elect by the engrafted word, wherein they receive the love of the truth, which purifieth their soules, and maketh them obedient thereunto through the spirit: unto this worke of God the faithfull Ministers of the Word are subservient, when they hold forth the Truth in sincerity and manifest the knowledge of the glory and life of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

The first remedy then, will bee to stirre up Ministers, who understand this Mystery of Godlinesse ordinarily to presse and preach the maine things which discover the life and spirituall estate of Christ as the Truth is in him, that their hearers may know, first, positively what that life is whereunto they are called; and then negatively, what that life and state is wherein men are by nature from which they are called: and this should bee done not so much by an inlargement of themselves upon many particular branches and twigges of duties as upon the manifestation of the Principles and essentiall properties of the spirituall and carnall man, from whence the knowledge of duties will of it selfe flow: I doe not meane that the preaching of par-

particular duties is unprofitable or ought to bee omitted; but I conceive that the fundamentals which discover the hidden man of the heart both in respect of the Righteousnesse of the spirituall and of the unrighteousnesse of the fleshly nature should be mainly and ordinarily so proposed, as from the discovery of that which is conformable or inconformable unto the image of Gods life in Christ, all particular duties should bee derived and pressed upon the conscience; and I beleeve that because godly and zealous men commonly spend more of their strength in matters of particular concernment then in such a fundamentall course; that two evils arise from thence unto the hearers, and one in the Ministers themselves. First, that the naturall corruptions of the hearts of all men, remaine in some altogether, in others in a great measure undiscovered at the root; by which means they still conceiving well of themselves, or better than they ought, are not truly humbled before God, and mortified unto the world, but live still as men in the world, and take up the profession of Religion in the performance of certain duties, rather than in the pursuit of a heavenly call to come unto Christ Jesus. Secondly, that such as are ingenuous and have tasted the Kingdome of God, and thereupon are gotten into a hatred of the world, being fervent in spirit to serve the Lord, are driven, by the much pressing of particular duties, to an over acting zeale; either against or for some persons or actions, which zeale having no temperament of love, meeknesse, and lenity, to heale and beare with the infirmities of the weake, or to bring their owne proceeding with them home to the true aime of the holy profession which is to discover Christ unto those that goe astary from him, they are so farre from edifying the Church of God by their forwardnesse, that they rather disturb and destroy every thing they meddle withall; but if they were instructed by their teachers to understand the way wherein Christ did walke to shew judgement unto the Gentiles; namely, that he did not strive, nor cry, nor cause any man heare his voyce in the streets: that hee did not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax till hee send forth judgement unto victory. If I say they were taught to know him in this, as in all other things, and were obliged to judge themselves in all their aimes Mat. 12. 19, 20.

aimes, to doe nothing out of the Way of conformity unto him, in his walking in the flesh, they would easily refrain from the intemperancy of their passionate zeal, for or against particular matters which reach not unto the heart of the profession.

The evill which in this course of preaching doth befall unto the Ministers themselves, who otherwise are Godly and holy men, is this; that they easily overshoot themselves, either by pressing a particular duty too much and indiscreetly laying too great weight upon it towards all without distinction of cases, whereby the weaker consciences are straitned and ensnared; or by applying a duty unto matters of state and publick relations to the prejudice of one party for the advantage of another upon reports or mistakes and misconstructions of matters, from whence oft times great scandals and discontents arise, and are fomented to the widening of breaches without all hope of reconcilement: If the Ministers presse not the fundamentall aime of the profession; but rest in the delivery of theoreticall truths, and the application thereof unto particular duties, It is no great Wonder that their hearers remain ignorant of it, and Walke not up to it; and it must naturally follow, that all the care whereunto their conscience will draw them in their profession, will bee nothing else, but a profession of some particular tenets and practises for which they will strive as for life and death: not that I think that any truth or righteous practise is rightly to be esteemed or neglected; but that all the Theorie of the World, and all the performances that can be wrought in particular duties may bee a matter of meere Hypocrisie in the professor; and nothing else but an occasion of strife and disturbance towards those to whom our profession is addressed, if the true aime of the holy profession bee not minded: the teaching then of the aime of our profession (by Gods blessing upon the word of his servants) may rectifie the purpose of the hearers in their profession, and cure the first and fundamentall cause of all our distempers; and if once this radicall cause be taken away, the secundary Which is but a streame flowing from that fountain, will soon be dried up, by the heat of true love and sincerity which will take possession of the affections of those that in the Spirit follow Jesus Christ.

For

For as the ſecond Cauſe of our Diſtempers, viz. *the Want of Proportion in the Means uſed towards a through Reformation, to produce the Effect intended thereby, is an effect of the firſt: So the ſecond Remedy of that evil, will be a conſequence of the firſt, namely the way of doing all things in love. For he that aimeth at nothing in the way of his Profeſſion, but to follow Jeſus Chriſt, will find that he in his way of walking did proportionate all his undertakings to the end for which he did them, by the manifeſtation of Gods love to thoſe towards whom he did make his application. And becauſe there is little or no ſincerity of Brotherly love apparent in the uſe of the Means which are ſet a foot for the advancement of a Religious Reformation amongſt us; therefore every thing which is done by many of us, is altogether unſutable to the end for which it is performed: for although the thing which is done, be in it ſelf never ſo good and juſt; yet if the ſpirit of Divine love do not go along with the performance of the work, there will be no proportion found therein to reach the end for which it is to be undertaken; becauſe there is nothing but love that can fit every thing to the good of thoſe to whom it is done. The Apoſtle ſaith, that there is* neither circumciſion available in Chriſt Jeſus, nor uncircumciſion, but Faith which worketh by Love. *The object of Faith is Chriſt, when we take him in the Covenant as our aime to be found in him: and if this Faith hath any life in us, and is not a meer verball profeſſion, it will be operative in that Love wherein He did all his works amongſt men, and towards his Father. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of the Rule by which we ſhould walk as children of God, giveth us this charge,* Epheſ. 5. 2. Walk *(ſaith he)* in love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us and hath given himſelf for us. *If then our aime is Chriſt, it will appeare that the chief thing wherein our conformity with Chriſt muſt ſtand, will be the exerciſe of love towards the Brethren for Gods ſake, and of Holineſſe to be ſeparate from the world; and when we ſhall reflect upon the uſe of the Means which are ſet afoot and put in the hands of moſt men for the advancement of our Reformation, we ſhall find that nothing is ſo much wanting both in the framing of the counſels, and in the execution of the works, as the ſpirit of Brotherly love, and of Holineſſe: and where theſe two are deficient in thoſe who act a Reformation, what can the event be other then diſorder and confuſion?*

The Remedy of the ſecond Cauſe of our Diſeaſe.

Gal. 5. 6.

Some

Some Act altogether by the way and in the means of Christian liberty, some by the way and in the means of Christian Authority; but because neither of these for the most part are acted by the spirit of love to one another, or by the spirit of Holinesse to bee seperate from the world, and from their owne interests in what they doe; therefore they act nothing for, but against one another, as if Christian Liberty and Christian Authority were things altogether inconsistent; and so the means which should advance both the one and the other part of our spirituall constitution, are not only ineffectuall, but offensive and destructive to each other, because neither the desire of liberty, nor the pretence of Authority are put forth in the spirit of love, to serve others thereby in true Holinesse, but a certain interest of state is rather look't upon both wayes, which makes both the path of Liberty and of Authority to become unchristian to those that walke therein with partiality and worldly aimes, and this is the only cause why all our works and proceedings of this nature doe miscarry; because many of those that are the Actors thereof in making use of the means doe not, for the most part minde the golden Rules of spirituall proportion and prudency for edification, which are the lawes of Love and Holinesse; but in stead of these are carried sometimes, even in their best actions, by a Rule of humane Jealousie, which begets nothing but Passion and Policie: And this once being discovered, doth wholly blast their proceeding, and maketh all the means, though otherwise in themselves never so powerfull, wholly disproportionate unto the effect.

The second Remedy then is this: That godly Ministers, whom I look upon as the chiefe Actors of our Reformation, and such as must put life into the Meanes thereof, must first set their own hearts aright in this frame of Love and Holinesse, and then stirre up one another to the Counsels and Deliberations which these Principles, according to the Word of GOD, will suggest. And because in the framing of Designes which tend unto a publike good, it is apparent that on all sides a Concurrence is sought for by those that act in the affaires of State, with those that are set in the Church to act for Christs kingdome: and that as Moses *could not be without* Aaron *at first, when he came to the people;*

so

So Aaron *could not be without* Moses *at last when the people was to march through the Wilderneſſe; and that neither the one nor the other durſt go a ſtep forward without a direction from God in their wayes; therefore in the concurrence of States-men and Miniſters towards a Reformation by the uſe of the meanes; both* Moses *and* Aaron *muſt walke by one Rule of Chriſtianity, whereof the end is brotherly love and holineſſe, and not by two different rules, as the cuſtome of moſt men is, and if the Miniſters ſuffer themſelves to be taken off from this aime by any pretence whatſoever, or doe not labour to ſway the Reſolutions of the Maſter-Builders in the common wealth, according to theſe Rules, that all publick conſtitutions and the wayes of acting them upon the ſpirits of men may ſavour of nothing but of love, of holineſſe, and of meekneſſe in Authority by the directions of the word and the Way of Chriſts walking; (I ſay) if Miniſters do not exactly keep themſelves to this Rule and draw others to walk thereby, they will be by their owne weakneſſe and the craft of others drawn over to ſerve ſtate ends, and be made uſe of to divide others, and to be divided from others and from one another amongſt themſelvs, according to the wicked maxim of Machiavilian Government* Divide & Impera, *and who doth not ſee that the enimies of our Reformation, leave nothing unattempted to put this maxime in execution, and that they find opportunity enough and more then enough, ſo to doe in every thing which is attempted in publick by reaſon of the unchriſtian frame of our Spirit and our Walking by a two-fold Rule or without the Rules of charity and holineſſe? For Satan which worketh in them, and is the Prince of this world, finding us who pretend to bee Miniſters of Chriſt out of the Sphere of Chriſts walking, and in the Sphere of his owne Kingdome, medling with worldly intereſts which concerne us not, hath power over us, to make us that are called Miniſters more then all other men in the world to ſerve his ends, of diſturbing the Peace of mankind, and tearing the Church of God in Peices, and only becauſe wee are not in the way wherein God hath ſet us: but if on the other ſide wee ſtand in the ſimplicity of our Chriſtian way and walking to deliberate and doe all things both in private and publick by love, and for holineſſe according to Chriſts example, then wee are in our full ſtrength, armed with light, and*

Satan in the power of darkneſſe cannot come neer us or comprehend us. And if it is not poſsible through our own default te put this Counſell in practiſe amongſt us, who are convicted of the truth thereof, whether we are Independents or Preſbyterians, we are all alike guilty before God of our own ruine, and of the generall diſturbance of this Church and State.

The Remedy of the evil effects of our diſeaſe.

I have ſpoken as briefly as I could contract my thoughts concerning the Remedies which will worke a cure upon the Cauſes of our diſeaſe; now I muſt ſpeake alſo a word of that which I conceive will bee of uſe to prevent the dangerous effects thereof; whereby our diſtempers are daily increaſed. The diſeaſe, in my conception, is a diſtracted neſſe of ſpirit in a divided minde, which hath wrought a diſjointing of our affections; ſo that we ſtand as a tall man diſtracted in his thoughts, and divided in all his reſolutions, who hath no command or little uſe of any of his members; becauſe they are all out of joynt, and hang as it were looſe one from another. Thus this Church the talleſt of any Reformed in Europe, and fit to bee a leader of the reſt in the ſpirituall Conqueſt of Canaan, doth ſtand within it ſelfe and to others uſeleſſe.

The effects of this our diſtraction and diviſion which increaſe our diſeaſe and make it grow upon us, are chiefely three. Firſt jealouſies, fears and evill ſurmiſes of every thing that is deſigned by any party which is not our own. Secondly, cenſures, reproaches diſputes, accuſations and revilings againſt the perſons and the actions of a different party. Thirdly, oppoſitions and croſſe proceedings in counſells and attempts, againſt all that are not exactly in the way wherein that party doth walke of which we are. Theſe three effects beget each other reciprocally not only in every man within himſelfe, and in every party within it ſelfe; but in every man and party in relation to another, as hee ſtands at a diſtance from the ſame; and all of theſe make our diſtempers almoſt paſt remedy, nor can the one well bee cured without the other; and therefore the Remedies muſt needs bee ſuch, as can have an influence upon all at once, to ſtop the current thereof, upon our own and other mens ſpirits, if they ſhould prove ſucceſsfull towards a cure.

The field of this diſcourſe is ſo large, that I ſhall at this time

but

but name only the heads of things, which must become the ingredients of this Physick; leaving the particular composition and application thereof unto some other time, wherein God perhaps may give a call and grace to elaborate the same; and this I shall do to give unto thee Christian Reader, an object of prayer and meditation; that thou mayest be moved to goe to God, and to stirre up thy selfe and others daily, till these Remedies be applyed unto our diseases as they ought to be.

If then the forenamed effects of our diseased Church should bee cured by this worke of Reformation; wee must consider not only what is requisite to allay our present fits of distemper; but also that which both in our age and in time to come will build us up unto a habitation of God through the Spirit, and propagate the blessings of the Gospel unto Posterity.

To cure then our present distempers, it is evident that an unlimited liberty to every one to vent and practise whatsoever he shall think good without controll, will not do it; because this very Liberty hath begotten our distempers, and no doubt will increase them, if no course be found to regulate mens proceedings concerning their publike Profession, so as they shall have no just cause to complain that they are persecuted for Conscience sake. But how to determine the way of Regulating mens proceedings, so as none shall have any just cause of complaint, herein lies the difficulty: Yet I conceive it may thus be taken away: Let all Parties who take the Holy Scriptures for the Rule of Faith and Practise, set down positively and declare plainly, either that which they judge to be fundamentall in matter of Doctrine and Practise, or clearly commanded and usefull for Edification; or that wherein they professe a full agreement with their Brethren. If they do either of the two last, as (I thinke) all may easily be engaged to do, either by the demand of any one Party, that seeks to advance Peace; or by the command of the Civil Magistrate, who ought to restrain Quarrels, and take away the causes thereof so far as he can in publike: If (I say) either of these positive Declarations, or both, be delivered by each Party to another, then the Apostles counsel is to be put in execution, which is Phil. 3. 16, Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us minde the same thing. Which counsel, to me, doth furnish this matter of advise, in reference to our present constitution.

First, let the Parties by some of their selected men (who shall do all things with their full consent and knowledge) make a draught of the full Agreement of those former Declarations; and that being imparted unto all, let an Acknowledgement be made concerning it, that it is that whereunto All have attained, and wherein they will minde the same thing to edifie one another in the Truth whereunto they are come.

Secondly, Let the same Parties declare negatively the things wherein they conceive they disagree from each other: And when these Declarations are drawn up, let those that have penned them adde their advice concerning the Wayes of reconciling the differences, whether in Judgement or in Practise; and then let some selected men, the most moderate of each Party, be called together to set down the joint agreement of their Advices concerning the way of reconciling Differences; and according to that Agreement, let them make a tryall of reconciling the Differences, and offer it to all, only as an Essay without prejudice to any, to be considered.

Thirdly, Let the same Parties declare, both Positively and Negatively, the Rules by which they are willing to walk inoffensively towards those with whom they do not agree; and in case any offences be given or taken about those things, How the same ought to be taken away by mutuall consent. Here then the same selected men, or others, may be set a Work to peruse such Declarations, and gather into one Body the Rules whereunto all sides will agree to walk by, to avoid offences; and let every one who will pretend to any freedome of Profession in publike, be obliged towards those that have inspection over the publike, to walke by those Rules of inoffensivenesse, notwithstanding any difference that is, or may arise in after-times amongst themselves or others.

These things I conceive may be done without great difficulty, and will be done by all those that love peace; And that they may be done, I could wish that the Supreme Authority of the Kingdom would appeare in it to procure it; that when the Publike Confession of Faith, *and* Catechisme, *shall be put forth, all such as shall desire the protection of the Supreme Power, and shall be willing to live in peace with those that allow of the Government established by Law, may be enjoyned thus to proceed towards the settlement of an union between them and their Brethren, in the Profession of the Gospel:*

and in the mean while, till this can be done, if all ſides would agree voluntarily upon a ceſſation from all bitterneſſe and railing accuſations againſt each other, or if it ſhould by thoſe that are in place of Authority be enjoyned as a Preparatory for ſo good a worke, it would be very conſonant to the abatement of our diſtractions, and commendable in thoſe that ſhould do it willingly. But if no ſuch way of tranſacting differences can be brought to paſſe anſwerable to the counſel of the Apoſtle, truly then I muſt confeſſe that I can ſee no way to prevent the growing effects of our fatall diſtempers, except God ſo bleſſe the Government by law eſtabliſhed, with that ſpirit of Diſcretion, of Moderation, of Equity, and of Lowlineſſe in all things which it doth act, that none ſhall be able to find any juſt grievance at it. And to this effect, the leſſe the Claſſicall Preſbyteries ſhall reſemble the Civil Courts of Judicature, or the Biſhops Courts in formentime, the more they will be ſutable to the end for which they are inſtituted, which is, to entertain Brotherly conferences and conſultations about ſpirituall matters for mutuall aſſiſtance and ſupport in the Wayes of God; and not at all to intermeddle with the Congregations in any of their particular affairs, which are not voluntarily brought unto them as a Caſe wherein their Judgement is ſought unto; for no particular Church, by its ſubordination to a Claſſis, is to be deprived of any right which it hath within it ſelf, but is rather thereby to be maintained therein.

The Maximes then of ſpirituall Communion to be obſerved in the Claſſical Preſbyteries, that all miſconſtructions of their Wayes which occaſion jealouſies and clamours, may be prevented, ought to be publiſhed, to wipe away the feares which enſnare us into diſtractions againſt the duties of Love. And it will be neceſſary not only to publiſh thoſe Maximes for this end; but three other things more muſt be ſatisfactorily, and from the grounds of Scripture cleared, if ever the Government ſhall proſper, to ſettle us in Peace.

1. It muſt be made out, that the Miniſters of particular Congregations, and their Elderſhips, are bound in conſcience in the things belonging to their charge, to maintain a Brotherly communion and correſpondencie with each other, and conſequently to enter into ſuch combinations as to that effect they can conveniently caſt themſelves into.

2. That

2. That to such Combinations of Eldership, Appeals may and ought to be made, hath sufficiently been cleared by many, & especially by Mr. Paget of Amsterdam, in a Treaty which hath not been answered by any that I know. But the second thing requisite to clear mens scrupulous apprehensions about the proceedings of such combined Eldership, is not so much their Right to receive Appeals and judge Authoritatively thereof; as to make the wayes of their handling matters in judging thereof, as a Senate of spirituall men, evident; that is, To shew forth their way of handling things amongst themselves, by what Rules and Grounds it doth stand, in the Communion of Saints; to prejudge no mans just and conscionable Liberty, and yet to act Regularly, and with all competent Authority.

3. What the way should be, by which the Combination of Elderships ought to deale with such as are without, who disturbe and trouble the peace of their Congregations. Here, the manner of conferring with those that are not co-ordinate with them in the Profession, is to be opened, to shew that it doth tend only to the conviction and reformation of mens spirits, and not to the blasting of mens names, or any other outward inconveniencie to be brought upon them by reason of their disagreement from them in opinion and practise.

If these declarations concerning the Classicall Presbyteries were published, as I conceive they may bee drawn up, from the grounds of Scripture, and undeniable Principles of Holy communion, and right reason; and backed with the practise of all the best Reformed Churches; they might bee a fit playster for the sores which are in mens minds against the government.

These are in briefe the heads of my thoughts concerning the cure of our present fits of distemper, as it may by Gods blessing be wrought out in a spirituall way; what the Civill Magistrate in his Prudence and according to his place, may and ought to doe outwardly to regulate the outward behaviours of men, so as to make them without offence, I shall not now speak of; but leave it to the wisdome of the State; praying, that God would direct them to doe all things by their own light and for their true end of government; and not by the instigation and prompting of others who may have by-ends to sway them.

As for the Reformation in times to come (because wee should endevour not only to build up the waſt places, but alſo to lay the foundations of many generations) thoughts ſhould be had of theſe things following; Without the accompliſhment of which in ſome competent meaſure, we ſhall tranſmit little or no comfort unto poſterity in the fruit of our undertakings. Thoughts then I ſay ſhould be had,

First, of the wayes of conſtituting Schooles for the education of youth throughout the Kingdome in reference to foure ſorts of people. viz. 1. to the Mechanicks. 2. To the Gentry and Nobles. 3. To thoſe that are to be trained up to teach others in humane Sciences. 4. To the ſons of the Prophets.

Secondly, of the wayes of purging the Univerſities from the froth of ambitious and contentious Learning, and Debates of Sciences falſly ſo called; To bring Scholars to a Demonſtrative way of attaining profitable Knowledge, and by the exerciſe and imployment of their Talents for the benefit of each other without envy, to increaſe in infinitum beyond the preſent bounds thereof.

Thirdly, of enlarging unto all ſorts of people Scripturall knowledge; not only by Catecheticall exerciſes, more exactly to be intended for the manner thereof, by Paſtors, Parents, School-maſters, and Maſters of families, then hitherto hath been minded; but by regular and well ordered Conferences, either in private or in publike, as well to reſolve doubts from the Text, as to enlarge the diſcovery of Truths and Myſteries therein.

Fourthly and laſtly, of the wayes and Rules of Spirituall and Rationall Meditation, in Divine and Humane things; to rectifie the Principles of mens thoughts in the ſearch of Knowledge; whether from the Scripture, by the grounds of demonſtrating the true ſenſe thereof, in the Literal, Material, and Myſtical analyſis of the Text; or from other Objects wherein the Mind of man may be more freely imployed, either for Theoretical or Practical aims.

Of all which it is not now ſeaſonable to ſpeak any more, but this; That I ſhall intreat thee (good Reader) not to deſpiſe the dayes of ſmall things, nor to miſtruſt Gods power and goodneſſe concerning that which he doth intend to do in the laſt dayes; but to lift up thy prayer with me, that we may be all fitted to receive, and to make right uſe of the Grace, which in the midſt of many trials is offered unto us in Christ Jeſus. To him be glory for ever. Amen.

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Concerning a CHURCH *as it is the House of God.*

1. A Congregationall Church is a (*a*) dwelling place of Mount *Zion*, (*a*) Isa. 4, 5. *The Lord will create a cloud upon every dwelling place of Mount* Zion, *and upon her Assemblies. Ergo*, there are many dwelling places, & many Assemblies of Mount *Zion*: and each of them hath a promise of the Lords presence with them.] And one of her Assemblies, that is to say, a (*b*) House of God. (*b*) 1 Tim. 3. 15. *The House of God, which is the Church of the living God.*

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2. This house is *built upon the foundation* (c) *of the Apostles and Prophets; Jesus Christ himself being the cheife corner stone.*

(c) Ephes. 2. 20. *and ye* (viz. Ephesians) *are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets; Jesus Christ himself being the cheif corner stone,* as the Ephesians were, so all true Churches are built upon Christ alone.

3. The end and use of this building, is to bee an (d) habitation of God through the Spirit. (d) Ephes. 2. 22. *in whom you* (viz. Ephesians) *also are builded together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

4. God then through (e) Christ dwelleth therein; (e) Joh. 17. 23. *I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one. Ergo,* if they be united by any other tye to one another, then by their relation to Christ, they are neither perfect as one; nor a true habitation of God by the Spirit.

And that two wayes:

First in the lively members of Christs body fitly joyned together.

Secondly in the spirituall ordinances of his worship and government rightly observed.

Chap. II.

Of the Members of Christs body and their conjunction.

THe members of Christs body are all the lively (f) stones of the house of God, (f) 1 Pet. 2. 4, 5. *To whom coming as unto a living stone, &c. ye also as lively stones are built up a spirituall house, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spirituall sacrifice acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ*] built upon (g) Christ; and set in their proper places, to offer up spirituall sacrifice unto him. (g) 1 Cor. 3. 9. *Ye are Gods building*; and Ephes. 2. 21. *In whom* (viz. in Christ) *all the building is fitly framed together.*

2. The stones of this building are either the Foundations, or the Corners, or the Walls.

3. The chief and only foundation, which is the head of the corner, is Christ Jesus. 1 Cor. 3. 11. *Other foundation can no man lay, then that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.* & 1 Pet. 2. 7.

Unto

Unto you he is precious (*viz.* Christ) *but unto the disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.* Compared with *Psal.*118.22. & Isa. 28. 16. *Thus saith the Lord, behold I lay in Sion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.*

4. The secondary foundations (*i*) next unto Christ, are the Apostles and Prophets, (*i*) Ephes. 2. 20. *Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* & Revel. 21. 14. *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lambe.*

5. The walls are the Body of common members, which is the Congregation of believers, joyned (*k*) together in one. (*k*) Cant. 8. 8, 9. *We have a little sister,* &c. *What shall we do for our sister?* &c. *If she be a wall, we shall build upon her a palace of silver.*

6. The corner-stones which joyn the walls together, are Officers (*l*) in the house, (*l*) Ephes. 4. 11, 12. *Pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints,* and (πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν, *for the making up*) And as (*m*) joynts in the members of the Body. (*m*) Ibid. vers. 16. From *whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joynt supplieth. Ergo,* the joyning and compacting of the Body together, is by the office of the joynts.

7. These officers are differenced (*n*) according to the grace and gifts given to them for the edification of the Body, (*n*) Rom. 12. 6. *Having then gifts differing, according to the grace that is given us.* & Ephes. 4. 16. That *which every joynt supplieth — maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of it self in love.*] in their proper (*o*) offices. (*o*) Rom. 12. 4. *All members have not the same office.*

8. These offices are either for speaking, (*p*) or for the doing of some service. (*p*) 1 Pet. 4. 11. *If any man speak — if any man minister,* (διακονεῖ) that is, doth service.

The office of him that speaketh, is either to teach, (*q*) or to exhort. (*q*) Rom. 12. 7, 8. *He that teacheth, on teaching; he that exhorteth, on exhortation.*

The office of him that is imployed about some service, is either

to rule, (r) or to impart and shew mercy. (r) Rom. 12. 8. *He that ruleth—he that sheweth mercy.*

9. By these offices, all things necessary and comfortable to the household of Faith, in respect of the inward and outward man, may be supplied.

In respect of the inward man, it is necessary that the understanding of the household be supplied with knowledge, and the will with sincerity of zeale to obedience. The first belongeth to the Teacher, the second to the Exhorter.

In respect of the outward man, it is necessary that the life and conversation of the household be rightly ordered, that is, sutably (s) to the holy profession. (s) Ephes. 4. 1. *Walke worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called*] And that their bodily necessities be supplied in case of want, by the charity of their fellow members. The first belongeth unto the Ruler; the second unto the Deacon.

10. More then this nothing is requisite in ordinary, to build up the Body in (t) love within it self. (t) Ephes. 4. 16. *The effectuall working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of it self in love.*

And therefore, in ordinary, none other offices are either usefull, or mentioned in the Scriptures, as appointed by Christ for the constitution of his Church.

The life (u) and action of these members, is to observe all Gods ordinances. (u) 1 Cor. 11. 2. *I praise you brethren—— that you keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you.* & Luk. 1. 6. *They were Righteous before God, walking in all the commandements and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*

Chap. III.

Of the Ordinances of Worship and Government.

1. The ordinances of Gods worship are duties prescribed in the (x) Word, (x) Isa. 8. 20. *To the law and to the testimony.* & chap. 66. 1, 2. *The heaven is my throne——but to this man will I look, who trembleth at my word.*] According to which God is to be served in spirit (y) and truth, by every one,

one. (y) Joh. 4. 24. *God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth.*

And the ordinances of Government are duties preſcribed for ever unto the (z) Rulers, (z) 1 Tim. 3. 15. *That thou mayeſt know how thou oughteſt to behave thy ſelf in the houſe of God.* & chap. 5. 21. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the elect Angels, that thou obſerve theſe things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.* & chap. 6. 13, 14. *I give thee charge in the ſight of God,* &c. *that thou keep this commandement without ſpot unrebukeable, untill the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*] According to which the affairs of the houſhold are to be (a) ordered, (a) Tit. 1. 5. *I left thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldeſt ſet in order the things that are wanting——as I had appointed thee.* & 1 Cor. 14. 40. *Let all things be done decently and in order.* & Coloſſ. 2. 5. *I am with you in the ſpirit, joying and beholding your order.*] both for the increaſe (b) of Grace, (b) Epheſ. 4. 13. *Untill we all come unto a perfect man.* And *v.* 16. *maketh increaſe.*] and the taking away of (c) Scandals, (c) 1 Cor. 5. 7. *Purge out the old leaven.* & *v.* 12. *Do not ye judge them that are within?* & *v.* 13. *Therefore put away from among you that wicked perſon.*

2. The uſe of theſe Ordinances is, to betroth (d) the conſciences of men, and bind them over unto God in the covenant of grace; and to keep them faithfull to him, (d) Ezech. 16. *v.* 8. till 15. & 2 Cor. 11. 2. *I have eſpouſed you to one husband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte Virgin to Chriſt.*] or to reclaim them (e) when they are faulty therein. (e) 1 Cor. 4. 21. *Shall I come unto you with a rod,* &c.

3. All the Ordinances then are Meanes which God doth uſe, either to bring (f) men to his Covenant, (f) Exod. 19. 5. *If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye ſhall be a peculiar treaſure unto me.*] or to confirm (g) and keep them in it, (g) Iſa. 8. 16. *Binde up the Teſtimony, ſeal the Law among my diſciples.* & Ezek. 20. 19, 20. *I am the Lord your God; walk in my ſtatutes, and keep my judgements and do them; and hallow my Sabbaths; and they ſhall be a ſigne between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.*

4. The meanes which doth bring men to the Covenant, is that which

which begetteth Faith; the meanes which doth confirm and keep men in the Covenant, is that which increaſeth and ſtrengtheneth Faith; and the meanes which doth reclaim men from the breach of the Covenant, is that which doth chaſtiſe unbelief and diſobedience.

5. To beget Faith, the ordinance of Preaching (*h*) is appointed; (*h*) Rom. 10. 14. *How ſhall they beleeve in him of whom they have not heard?, and how ſhall they heare without a Preacher?* & *v.* 17. *So then faith commeth by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*] To confirm it, (*i*) the ſame ordinance is to be uſed, (*i*) 1 Pet. 2. 2. *Deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*] together with the ordinance of (*k*) Prayer, (*k*) Act. 6. 4. *But we will give our ſelves continually unto Prayer and to the miniſtry of the Word.* and the right uſe of (*l*) Baptiſm; (*l*) Mat. 28. 19. *Baptizing them in the name of the Father, &c.* & Act. 2. 40. *Then they that gladly received the word, were baptized.*] and the (*m*) Lords ſupper; (*m*) Act. 2. 41. *And they continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles doctrine, and fellowſhip and breaking of bread, and in prayer.*] and the fellowſhip of the Saints by their (*n*) aſſemblies; (*n*) Heb. 10. 25. *Not forſaking the Aſſembling of our ſelves together,* &c.] and by the ſupporting of one another in their (*o*) burthens; (*o*) Gal. 6. 2. *Beare ye one anothers burdens, and ſo fulfill the Law of Chriſt.*] And to reclaim the diſobedient from the breach of the Covenant, the rod (*p*) of Diſcipline, (*p*) 1 Cor. 4. 21. *Shall I come with a Rod,* &c. and weapons of (*q*) Revenge are appointed, (*q*) 2 Cor. 10. 6. *Having in a readineſſe to Revenge all diſobedience.*

6. Theſe ordinances are not to be concealed, but by the publike profeſſion (*r*) of the Goſpel, adminiſtred in the Church. (*r*) Mat. 5. 14. *Ye are the light of the world; a city that is ſet on a hill cannot be hid.* & *v.* 15. *Neither do men light a candle and put it under a buſhell*——*v.* 16. *Let your light ſhine ſo before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven.*

7. The ordinances of Government are to be adminiſtred by thoſe, who are intruſted with the (*s*) Keyes of the kingdome of heaven, whoſe authority is to binde or looſe, and to remit or

retain

retain ſinnes, according to the revealed will of God, miniſterially, (*s*) Mat. 16. 19. *And I will give thee the Keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on earth ſhalbe bound in heaven; whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on earth ſhall be looſed in heaven.* & Joh. 20. 23. *Whoſoever ſinnes ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſoever ſinnes ye retain, they are retained.*

The key of Knowledge muſt alwayes make way for the key of Diſcipline; becauſe the weapons of Righteouſneſſe muſt firſt lead the minds of men captive, and convict their conſciences (*t*) before they be made uſe of to revenge diſobedience. (*t*) 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. *The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds; caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it ſelf againſt the knowledge of God;* and *bringing into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Chriſt;* and *having in a readineſſe to revenge all diſobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.* & Luk. 11. 52. *Ye have taken away the key of knowledge,* &c.

Chap. IV.

Concerning the office & imployment of the Paſtor and Teacher.

1. That Chriſt Jeſus hath appointed Paſtors and Teachers to be officers in his Church, is evident from *Joh.* 10. 1, 2. *the Sheep-fold —— the Shepherd of the ſheep.* Epheſ. 4. 11. *He gave —— ſome Paſtors and Teachers.*

2. That to theſe officers, the whole work and effect of the ordinary Adminiſtration is committed, is alſo evident from *Epheſ.* 4, 11, till 17. where next unto the extraordinary officers of the church, who are Apoſtles, Prophets and Evangeliſts; the ordinary, who are Paſtors and Teachers, are ranked: unto whom, together with the others, all is aſcribed, that is to be done concerning the Church. Therefore the extraordinary officers ceaſing, all is committed unto the ordinary adminiſtration, which reſteth upon theſe, 1 *Pet.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Feed the flock,* (ποιμάνατε) ſhepherdize the flock.

3. That

3. That theſe officers are diſtinct from Ruling Elders; and that Ruling Elders are ſubordinate unto their imployment, is cleer from 1 *Tim.*5.17. *The Elders that Rule well——eſpecially they that labour in the Word and doctrine.* That they are alſo diſtinct from Deacons, and that theſe are ſubordinate unto them in like manner, is cleer from *Act.* 6. 2, 3, 4. *It is not reaſon we ſhould leave the Word, and ſerve tables——Look out men——whom we may appoint over this buſines; but we will give our ſelves to Prayer and to the miniſtery of the Word.*

4. That in the work of the Miniſtery, the duties of the Paſtor and Teacher are to be jointly performed, doth appeare by this; that *the Paſtors according to Gods heart, do feed the people with knowledge and underſtanding*, Jer. 3. 15. Then alſo *reproofs, rebukes, and exhortations*, which are the proper work of the Paſtor, muſt be performed; *with all long ſuffering and doctrine*: which is the proper work of the Teacher, 2 *Tim.*4.2.

5. That the ſpeciall gifts and proper works of both theſe, are nevertheleſſe diſtinct; is alſo apparent from *Rom.* 12. 6, 7, 8. *Having gifts differing——He that teacheth, on teaching; He that exhorteth, on exhortation.* And 1 *Cor.*12.8. *To one is given——the word of Wiſdome*, which is the Paſtoral; *to another the Word of knowledge*, which is the Doctoral gift.

6. So then the Paſtoral office doth eminently contain the uſe of all other offices: for all that is to be done by the Teacher, or by the Ruling Elder, or the Deacon, is to be ſubſervient unto this care; and in caſe theſe officers be wanting, the Paſtor is to do all by himſelf, even as the Apoſtles did the work of the Deacons before thoſe officers were choſen, *Act.* 4. 34, 35. *They laid down the prices at the Apoſtles feet, and diſtribution was made.* And when all theſe do their duties, he ought carefully to concurre with them therein, *Rom.* 12. 5. *We being many are one body; and every one members one of another.* 1 Cor. 12. 20. *They are many members, yet but one body.* verſ. 25. *The members ſhould have the ſame care one of another.*

7. The end and uſe of the Paſtoral office, is the ſame with the end and uſe of the Apoſtolical, Prophetical, and Evangelical office. Which is, *to perfect the Saints; to do the work of the miniſtery; and to build up the body of Chriſt*, Epheſ.4.12.

8. The

8. The effect of this office, when it is rightly performed, will be,

1. *The unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man,* Ephes. 4. 13.

2. Preservation from (*a*) seducers. (*a*) Ephes. 4. 14. *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every winde of doctrine, by the slight of men and cunning craftinesse whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

3. The growth (*b*) of the Body in all things in Christ. (*b*) Ephes. 4. 15. *But speaking the truth in love, in all things, may grow up unto him which is the head, even Christ.*

4. The jointing (*c*) and compacting of the Body together under Christ; that the Members may act within themselves for the building up of each other in love. (*c*) Ephes. 4. 16. *The whole Body fitly joyned together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectuall working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body to the edifying of it self in love.*

9. To gain these ends and effects, three things are requisite in the Pastor.

First, that his entry upon the office be lawfull.

Secondly, that the duties proper to it be discharged.

Thirdly, that the spirituall manner of performing those duties be observed.

1. *Of the Entry upon the office.*

10. The lawfull entry upon the Pastorall charge, is onely to come in by the *door*; and he that doth enter into the sheepfold *any other way, is a thief and a robber,* Joh. 10. 1, 2.

11. The door by which the shepherd must come, is Christ, Joh. 10. 9. *I am the door; by me if any man enter, he shall be saved.*

12. Now Christ by the annointing of the Spirit doth dwell in the (*d*) hearts of the faithfull, (*d*) 2 Cor. 1. 21, 22. *Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath annointed us is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts.* & 2 Cor. 3. 17. *Now the Lord is the Spirit.* & Ephes. 3. 16, 17. *Grant you —— to be strengthened with might*

by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.] If then a Minister doth offer himself by the Spirit with that Pastoral affection which proceedeth from Christ unto the flock; He who is both the (*e*) Door, and the (*f*) Porter, doth open himself in the heart of the Flock to receive him, and he enters in lawfully. (*e*) Joh.10.9. *I am the door*,&c. compared with *verse* 3. *To him* (viz. that entreth by the door) *the Porter openeth.* And with *Revel.* 3. 7. *He that hath the key of David, that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.*

13. If any man hath not this Pastorall affection and spirit which Christ had towards the flock; but commeth in *some other way*, that is, by some humane practises and contrivances of his own; Christ doth call him a *thief and a robber*, Joh. 10. 1. and saith, that he doth come *to steal, to kill, and to destroy*, ibid. v. 10. The heart then of the Flock must be opened to him that commeth unto them, else he cannot pretend to be the Pastor of their soules.

14. This door of the heart being first opened by the inward working of Christs spirit; the outward call also must follow upon, by a free choise, and orderly reception of him that is chosen, in a publike way, in the face of the Congregation, with the countenance of Authority; as *Aaron* was called & received, Hebr. 5. 4. *No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as Aaron was.*

II. *Of the Duties belonging to the office.*

15. The duties belonging to the Pastorall charge contain all the cares and endeavours, whereby the Flock is to be fed, conducted, preserved and defended.

16. The cares belonging to the feeding of the flock, are these——

First, to seek and find out pasture for them, *Joh.* 10. 9. *By me if any man enter in, he shall—— find pasture.* Which is done, by *giving attendance to reading*, 1 Tim. 4. 13. by meditating and applying himself to profit in knowledge, 1 Tim. 4. 15. *Meditate upon these things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appeare to all.* And to this effect he must keep the form of

Doctrine

Doctrine received from the Apoſtles, and the Truth of grace received from the Holy Ghoſt, both which are recommended to *Timothy*, 2 Tim. 1. 13, 14. *Hold faſt the forme of ſonnd words which thou haſt heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Chriſt Jeſus. Keep by the Holy Ghoſt which dwelleth in us, that good thing which was committed unto thee.*

Secondly, to give to the Flock that paſture which he findeth to be their proper portion. *Luke* 12. 42. *Give them their portion of meat*; which is done by dividing the Word to them, 2 *Tim.* 2. 15. *Study to ſhew thy ſelf approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be aſhamed; rightly dividing the word of truth.*

Thirdly, to give this portion in due ſeaſon. *Luke* 12. 42. *Give them in due ſeaſon their portion of meat.*

Fourthly, to give it according to every mans capacitie. *Mark* 4 33. *He ſpake the word unto them as they were able to beare it.* Then he muſt *give to babes, milk*; 1 Cor. 3. 2. and to thoſe that are of *full age, ſtrong meat*, Heb. 5. 12, 13, 14. He muſt *feed all with judgement*, Ezech. 34. 16. He muſt not *feed the weak with doubtfull diſputations*, Rom. 14. 1. Nor entertain with any, *profane and vain bablings, and oppoſitions of a Science falſly ſo called*, 1 Tim. 6. 20. & 2 Tim. 2. 16. *Or queſtions and ſtrife of words*, 1 Tim. 6. 4. and *contentions of Genealogies*, Tit. 3. 9.

17. The food to be given to the flock, is the word of God, Mat. 4. 4. *Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* This word of God, is none other but the faithfull word which the Apoſtles taught, *Tit.* 1. 9. *Holding [illegible] faithfull word as he hath been taught.* And all the word is taught, to the end that *it may beget Charity out of a pure heart, and of a good Conſcience, and of Faith unfained.* 1 Tim. 1. 5.

18. The cares belonging to the conduct of the Flock, are theſe——

Firſt, the good Shepherd ought to *call his ſheep by name*, Joh. 10, 3.

Secondly, he ought *to lead them out and in*, Joh. 10. 3, 9.

Thirdly, to *go before them*, Joh. 10. 4. to *be an example of the believers, in word, in converſation, in charity, &c.* 1 Tim. 4. 12.

Fourthly, *To visit the flock*, and *seek out the young ones*, Zach. 11.16. and *judge between cattell and cattell*, Ezek. 34.17.

19. The cares belonging to the preservation and defence of the Flock, are these——

First, to pray constantly for the flock, as the Apostle doth, *Rom.* 1.9. & 1 *Cor.* 1.4. *Ephes.* 1.16. *Phil.* 1.3,4. *Col.* 1.3,4,9. & 1 *Thess.* 1.2,3.

Secondly, to warne them of dangers, as the Apostle did the Ephesians, *Act.* 20.31. and God doth charge watchmen to do, *Ezek.* 3,17. & 33,3.

Thirdly, to be helpfull to them in all their infirmities, that is, *to beare the sheep that standeth still*, Zach. 11.16. *to heale and strengthen the sick and bind up the broken*, Ezek. 34.4. *to comfort the feeble and support the weake*, 1 Thess. 5.14. *to restore those that are taken in a fault*, Gal. 6.1.

4. *To bring back that which is driven away, and seek out that which is lost*, Ezek. 34.4.

Fifthly, to resist the *ravenous wolves*, and *men speaking perverse things*, Act. 20.29,30. *to convince gainsayers, and stop the mouths of unruly and vain talkers*, Tit. 1.9,10,11. *To reject hereticks*, Tit. 2.10.

Sixthly, to *lay down his life for the sheep*, to defend them, and *not as a hireling to run away from them*, Joh. 10.10,11.

And thus much of the Duties: now followeth to consider of

III. *The spirituall way, how these Duties should be performed.*

20. The manner and way of performing these Duties, is not arbitrary, depending upon the wit, or will and contrivance of mans wisdome; but spiritually to be regulated either by the Word which is expressed, or by the undoubted Principles of Edification. 1 *Cor.* 2.1. *I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdome.* & v.4. *My speech was not with enticing words of mans wisdome, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.* & 2 *Cor.* 1.12. *Not with worldly wisdome, but by the grace of God we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-*

wards.

wards. & chap. 4. 12. *Not walking in craftinesse, or handling the word of God deceitfully.*

21. The way then to regulate and order these Duties, hath three Spirituall paths:

The first is, that which setteth the Pastors spirit upon his proper imployment.

The second, that whereby his endeavours are fitted towards the Flock, and the Flock fitted to receive them at his hand.

The third is, that wherein his imployment is made edifying and usefull towards all. In the first path, he will be accepted of God; in the second and third, approved of men.

Of the first Path.

22. The Pastors spirit will be directed towards the work of his imployment, if he beare in minde,

What his relation is to God, in his office.

What the end and use of his work is.

And what the frame of his Affections, and Rules of performance should be, to make his way answerable unto these.

23. His relation unto God, is, that God doth intrust him with his Mysteries, and with the soules of his children: As a steward to dispense the mysteries unto Gods children; to have inspection over them, and to keep the Keyes of the House of GOD.

24. As a steward thus intrusted: the frame of his Affection must be *Faithfulnesse* (*a*) towards his Master; and the rule of his Performance must be, to study *to approve his conscience* to God, not regarding the judgement of men, but that of God alone. (*a*) 1 Cor. 4. 1. *Let a man so account of us as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the mysteries of God.* & *v.* 2. *It is required in stewards, that a man be found Faithfull.* & *v.* 3. *With me it is a small thing that I should be judged by you, or of mans judgement.* *v.* 4. *I know nothing by my self, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that justifieth me is the Lord.*

25. The mysteries wherewith he is intrusted, are the Word and the Ordinances.

26. As

26. As a Steward intruſted with the Word; the frame of his Affection muſt be *Sincerity*, (*b*) not to mixe any ſelf-ends with the Word. (*b*) 2 Cor. 2. 17. *We corrupt not the Word; but as of ſincerity, as of God, in the ſight of God, ſpeak we in Chriſt.*] And the rule of Performance in reference to God, is to ſpeak as in his ſight and preſence: and in reference to men, to renounce the hidden (*c*) things of diſhoneſty, and by the manifeſtation of the truth, to approve himſelf to the conſcience of every one. (*c*) 2 Cor. 4. 2. *We have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, ——but by the manifeſtation of the Truth commending our ſelves to every mans conſcience in the ſight of God.*

27. Then alſo, as a ſteward intruſted with the Ordinances; the frame of his ſpirit and affections muſt be free from prejudice, not preferring one Ordinance before another: And the rules of Performance are, to diſpence the Ordinances (*d*) impartially, (*d*) 1 Tim. 5. 21. *I charge thee —— that thou obſerve theſe things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.*] and to keep himſelf and the holy things pure: Himſelf, by not (*e*) partaking of other mens ſinnes; (*e*) 1 Tim. 5. 22. *Neither be partaker of other mens ſinnes; keep thy ſelf pure.*] the Holy things, by not giving them unto dogs (*f*) and ſwine; (*f*) Mat. 7. 6. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither caſt ye your pearls before ſwine.*

28. To diſcharge the truth committed unto him concerning the ſoules of Gods children; the frame of his Affections muſt be Faithfulneſſe unto them, for Gods ſake; and watchfulneſſe over them, as one that muſt (*g*) give an account, (*g*) Heb. 13. 17. *They watch for your ſoules, as they that muſt give an account.*] And accordingly the rule of his Performance unto them, muſt be, in diſpenſing the Word, to with-hold nothing from them which is profitable touching the whole (*h*) counſel of God, (*h*) Act. 20. 20. *I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you.* & *v.* 27. *I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the counſel of God.*] And in diſpenſing the Ordinances, to be *jealous over them with a godly jealouſie, leſt they ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity which is in Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 11. 2, 3.

29. The end and uſe of the work is, that Gods glory through Jeſus Chriſt; and the common edification (*i*) of every one by another,

another, through the right use of Gods graces, may be advanced. (*i*) 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11. *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another —— that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.*

30. And the frame of the Affection whereby the spirit of the Pastor will be enabled to reach this end, is (*k*) Love. (*k*) 1 Cor. 8. 1. *Charity edifyeth.* & 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3. *Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have no charity, I am as sounding brasse and a tinkling cymball: And though I have the gift of Prophecie, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing: And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burnt, and have no charity, it profiteth me nothing.* & Ephes. 4. 15. *Speaking the truth in love, ye may grow up unto him in all things.* & *v.* 16. *the Body unto the edifying of it self in love.*] And the Rule of Performance subservient hereunto, for matter of Doctrine, is, to *speak as the oracles of God*: and for matter of Action, is, to *doe as of the ability which God doth give*, 1 Pet. 4. 11.

The second Path.

31. The way to fit all Pastorall endeavours to the Flock, is threefold:

First, to make the work of the Ministery free from all worldly aimes; as, to (*l*) please men, to get (*m*) profit, or to get (*n*) humane glory. (*l*) 1 Thess. 2. 4. *We speak not as pleasing men, but God which tryeth our hearts; for neither at any time used we flattering words.* (*m*) Ibid. *v.* 5. *Nor used we a cloak of covetousnesse.* (*n*) Ibid. *v.* 6. *Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you nor of others.*] to be free from entanglements of (*o*) worldly cares, (*o*) 2 Tim. 2, 3, 4. *Endure hardnesse as a good souldier of Jesus Christ: no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a souldier.*] And not to be engaged to administer worldly (*p*) judicatures in order to the civil Magistrate, (*p*) Luk. 12. 13, 14. *And one of the company said unto him* (viz. to Christ) *Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me: And he said*

said unto him, Man, who made me a Judge or a divider among you?

Secondly, to do the work towards the Flock, with a willing (q) and ready minde without constraint, (q) 1 Pet. 5. 2. *Feed the flock —— taking the care thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready minde.*] with all gentlenesse and tendernesse of affection, and nurse-like (r) loving care, (r) 1 Thess. 2. 7, 8. *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own soules, because you were deare to us.*] With all just, holy, and unblameable (s) outward behaviour, (s) 1 Thess. 2. 10. *You are witnesses, and God also, how holily, justly, and unblameably we have behaved our selves among you that believe.*] And without all burdens (t) unto the Flock, so far as can be possibly. (t) 1 Thess. 2. 6, 9. *We might have been burdensome as the Apostles of Christ —— But ye remember our labour and travell, for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any.*

Thirdly, to undergoe any inconvenience whatsoever, rather then to give occasion (u) of offence unto any at the Gospel, (u) 2 Cor. 6. 3, 4. *Giving no offence in any thing, that the Ministery be not blamed; but in all things approving our selves as the Ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, &c.*

32. The way to fit the Flock to receive and admit of all Pastorall duties at their Pastors hands, is fourfold:

First, to walk openly (x) and in the light towards them, (x) Joh. 3. 21. *He that doth the truth commeth to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.* & 1 Joh. 1. 7. *If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.* Now God is in the light, by the manifestation of his truth to the conscience; if therefore a Pastor doth walk in this light to the Flock, he will fit them to receive his administration.] Which ought to be done by preparing and pre-informing their understandings concerning the course which is to be taken towards them; that they may not seem to be surprised, or bound to walk by an implicite faith under

under their Pastor, in blind submission.

Secondly, to make them sensible that all is done ministerially, as a service of love unto them, and to be *a help unto their joy*, and not to exercise any *dominion over their Faith*, 2 Cor. 1. 24. or (*y*) *Lord it* over their persons, (*y*) 1 Pet. 5. 3. *Neither as being Lords over Gods heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*] And yet not to give them occasion to take authority over their Pastor, or to (*z*) despise him, (*z*) 1 Tim. 4. 12. *Let no man despise thy youth.* & Tit. 2. 15. *Exhort and rebuke with all authority; let no man despise thee.*

Thirdly, to deale with every one of them as well in (*b*) private as in publike, as need may be, (*b*) Act. 20. 20. *I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you and have taught you publikely, and from house to house.*

Fourthly, to bring them to a contract with Christ, as espoused, (*c*) and to be presented unto him, (*c*) 2 Cor. 11. 2. *I have espoused you unto one husband, that I may present you as a chaste Virgin unto Christ.*

The third Path.

33. Although every Pastor is authorised in himself, by his office, to lead and rule the Flock; and as one who is accountable unto God, must discharge his conscience in the observation and practice of all Gods ordinances; And that every Congregation hath full power to do all things for its own edification, *decently and by an order*, 1 Cor. 14. 40. Yet by the Rules of holy communion (*d*) in Christianity, no Pastor, nor Flock, nor Christian also ought to walk or stand by himself alone, if possibly they can be joyned unto others in the publike profession. (*d*) Ephes. 4. 1. *Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called.* & *v.* 3. *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.* v. 4, 5. *One body, one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptisme.* v. 6. *one God and Father.* & v. 14. *Till we all come to the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Sonne of God, unto a perfect man.* & v. 14. *That we be no more tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.* v. 16. *The whole body fitly joyned*

together and compacted. & 1 Cor. 9. 19. *Though I am free from all men, yet I made my self a servant unto all, that I might gain the more.* v. 20. *To the Jewes I became as a Jew——to them that are under the Law, as under the Law.*——v. 21. *To them that are without Law, as without Law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law.* v. 22. *To the weak I became as weak——I am made all things to all——And this I do for the Gospels sake, that I might be made partaker thereof with you.*] If the Apostle did thus condescend to all, to be partaker of the Gospel with those that had an interest in it; then, all that have any interest in the Gospel, ought to condescend one to another, to partake of the same each with other; and consequently, no man ought to stand alone in the profession.

34. So then, every Minister of the Gospel, in the duties of his Ministerial charge, is bound in conscience to maintain a Brotherly communion and correspondency with his neighbour Ministers; chiefly in matters of common and publike concernment. So that every one is bound to ask the question which the Spouse proposeth unto Christ in the *Canticles*, chap. 1. 7. *Tell me (O thou whom my soule loveth) where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon?* And then to follow the duty prescribed in (e) the Answer, (e) Cant. 1. 8. *Go thy way forth by the foot steps of the flock, and feed thy kids besides the shepherds tents.*

35. By which means all the Congregations of Professours will be, as they ought to be, co-ordinate unto each other, as *companies of horses in Pharaohs chariots*, Cant. 1. 9. combined in the same warfare for the same Kings service.

36. Now this conjunction and co-ordination of Churches, by the brotherly combination of their Leaders; as it may not prejudge the liberty which they have in Christ, so it should oblige them to a right use of that liberty, to make it serviceable unto each other in the communion of Saints.

37. It cannot be serviceable to this end, and binding, without a free, willing, mutuall agreement of Brethren to walk in the same publike wayes; First, of Doctrine and of Worship, for the honour of God; secondly, of Government, for the good of Believers, to strengthen them in the way of the Heavenly calling;

Thirdly, of Discipline, for the rooting out of vice and scandals which dishonour the profession.

38. To make this agreement free and mutuall, there must be some Assemblies and Conferences settled; and these so ordered, that all things shall be carried with that equality, that none shall have cause to think himself borne down or excluded from his right, or past by and concluded without his consent in matters which do concern him.

39. And to do this, two things must needs be determined: First, what the orderly constitution of the Assemblies must be, in their Members, and method of handling matters by way of conference: Secondly, what the matters are which they should meddle withall; and what the things are which they should not meddle withall.

40. In all which, besides that which is cleerly to be gathered from the word of God, the practises and the tryed courses of the Reformed churches should be taken into consideration, and prudentially applied unto the circumstances of our present condition. Wherein I beseech God to direct us to his glory, in the advancement of our peace. *Amen.*

CHAP. V.

Concerning the office and imployment of Ruling Elders.

1. THat Ruling (*a*) Elders are officers in the Church of God, may be cleerly gathered from *Rom.* 12. 8. *He that ruleth with diligence.* (*a*) 1 Tim. 5. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, chiefly those that labour in the word and doctrine.* & 1 Cor. 12. 28. *God hath set in the Church Governments.*

2. That they are officers distinct from other officers, is also plain from the same place; chiefly from that of 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. and from *Rom.* 12. 4, 6. compared with 8. For in 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. he doth mention two sorts of Elders: first in the generall those that rule well; secondly more distinctly, those that in bearing rule, labour in the word and doctrine. And in *Rom.* 12. 4. the Apostle saith, that there are many members in the body of the

Church, and that they have not all of them the same offices: then, *v.* 6. he saith, that the gifts of grace which makes men capable of offices, are different: and then in the latter part of *v.* 6. and *v.* 7. & 8. he sheweth what the particular differences of offices are, amongst which he reckoneth up that of Ruling; from whence it followeth, that the Ruler is not only an officer, but a different officer from the others named in that place.

3. The nature of the office belonging to them may be understood, 1. By the names given to it; 2. By the things about which it is conversant; 3. By the end which it hath in being conversant thereabout; 4. By the parts of the work to be done in it.

First, the Names given to these Elders are, Rulers, Governours, Overseers, Stewards.

The name of *Ruler* in the originall is twofold; one doth import Superiority, another Action; the first is προεστὼς, the second, ἡγούμενος; both are translated Rulers: but προεστὼς doth properly signifie one that standeth over others in authority; and ἡγούμενος doth properly signifie one that doth lead and guide others in the way wherein they ought to walk.

The name of *Governour*, doth signifie one that giveth directions and addresses whereby others are ordered in a course, as a ship by him that sitteth at the helm thereof.

The name of *Overseer* (ἐπίσκοπος) doth import both authority and action, by the inspection which a Superior doth take of one that is under his charge.

The name of *Steward*, doth signifie one that is to see the laws and orders of his Masters house observed; and hath the keyes thereof committed unto his keeping.

2. The Things about which the charge is conversant, are (in generall) the Church, and such as may be gained thereunto. Which is the spirituall (*b*) house and tabernacle of God, (*b*) Ephes. 2. 21, 22. *It* (viz. the building) *groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord——an habitation of God through the Spirit.*] the body (*c*) of Christ, (*c*) 1 Cor. 12. 27. *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*] and the Kingdome which is not of this (*d*) world: (*d*) Joh. 18. 36. *My kingdome is not of this world.*] and therefore is not to be governed by the lawes of this world, nor can the officers thereof claim their calling and

authority from this world, nor ought they to meddle in their charge with the (*e*) affairs of this world, (*e*) Luk. 12. 14. *Who made me a Judge, or a divider over you?* If Christ was no Judge or divider in worldly matters; then none of his Officers, as under him.

In particular; this office is conversant about the Religious profession and life of those that belong in any respect to the Church, whether they be in, or out of office.

Thirdly, the End wherefore the Elders are conversant about these things, is, that they should look both to the Church and to the Members thereof: to edifie that, and preserve it from scandals; and to make these fit to walk worthy of the calling by which they are called in the Gospel.

4. The parts of their work are the severall duties whereunto they are obliged, which are chiefly these ——.

First, in respect of God, they are his (*f*) stewards, (*f*) Tit. 1. v. 5. with 7. *Thou shouldest ordain Elders in every city, as I appointed thee; if any be blamelesse —— for a Bishop* (an Overseer) *must be blamelesse as the steward of God.*] and therefore must be (*g*) faithfull, (*g*) 1 Cor. 4. 2. *It is required in Stewards, that a man be found faithfull.*] and administer their charge so, as to be (*h*) accountable unto him, (*h*) Heb. 13. 17. *Watch for your soules, as they that must give an account.*

Secondly, in respect of the Church, they must take (*i*) care of it, (*i*) 1 Tim. 3. 5. *If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?*] and that with (*k*) diligence, (*k*) Rom. 12. 8. *He that ruleth, with diligence.*

Thirdly, in respect of the Members thereof, they must (*l*) watch over them, (*l*) Heb. 13. 17. *They watch over your soules*] take pains for them, and (*m*) admonish them as occasion shall require, (*m*) 1 Thess. 5. 12. *Which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.*

Fourthly, in respect of the End of their imployment, they must be interessed and ingaged,

1. In the election, calling, and dimission of Officers to and from charges in the Church.
2. In the admission of worthy, and rejection of unworthy Members.

3. In

Church, and that they have not all of them the ſame offices: then, *v.* 6. he ſaith, that the gifts of grace which makes men capable of offices, are different: and then in the latter part of *v.* 6. and *v.* 7. & 8. he ſheweth what the particular differences of offices are, amongſt which he reckoneth up that of Ruling; from whence it followeth, that the Ruler is not only an officer, but a different officer from the others named in that place.

3. The nature of the office belonging to them may be underſtood, 1. By the names given to it; 2. By the things about which it is converſant; 3. By the end which it hath in being converſant thereabout; 4. By the parts of the work to be done in it.

Firſt, the Names given to theſe Elders are, Rulers, Governours, Overſeers, Stewards.

The name of *Ruler* in the originall is twofold; one doth import Superiority, another Action; the firſt is προϊστάμενος, the ſecond, ἡγούμενος; both are tranſlated Rulers: but προϊστάμενος doth properly ſignifie one that ſtandeth over others in authority; and ἡγούμενος doth properly ſignifie one that doth lead and guide others in the way wherein they ought to walk.

The name of *Governour*, doth ſignifie one that giveth directions and addreſſes whereby others are ordered in a courſe, as a ſhip by him that ſitteth at the helm thereof.

The name of *Overſeer* (ἐπίσκοπος) doth import both authority and action, by the inſpection which a Superior doth take of one that is under his charge.

The name of *Steward*, doth ſignifie one that is to ſee the laws and orders of his Maſters houſe obſerved; and hath the keyes thereof committed unto his keeping.

2. The Things about which the charge is converſant, are (in generall) the Church, and ſuch as may be gained thereunto. Which is the ſpirituall (*b*) houſe and tabernacle of God, (*b*) Ephes. 2. 21, 22. *It* (viz. the building) *groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord—— an habitation of God through the Spirit.*] the body (*c*) of Chriſt, (*c*) 1 Cor. 12. 27. *Now ye are the body of Chriſt, and members in particular.*] and the Kingdome which is not of this (*d*) world. (*d*) Joh. 18. 36. *My kingdome is not of this world.*] and therefore is not to be governed by the lawes of this world, nor can the officers thereof claim their calling and

authority from this world, nor ought they to meddle in their charge with the (*e*) affairs of this world, (*e*) Luk. 12. 14. *Who made me a Judge, or a divider over you?* If Christ was no Judge or divider in worldly matters; then none of his Officers, as under him.

In particular; this office is conversant about the Religious profession and life of those that belong in any respect to the Church, whether they be in, or out of office.

Thirdly, the End wherefore the Elders are conversant about these things, is, that they should look both to the Church and to the Members thereof: to edifie that, and preserve it from scandals; and to make these fit to walk worthy of the calling by which they are called in the Gospel.

4. The parts of their work are the severall duties whereunto they are obliged, which are chiefly these ——.

First, in respect of God, they are his (*f*) stewards, (*f*) Tit. 1. v. 5. with 7. *Thou shouldest ordain Elders in every city, as I appointed thee; if any be blamelesse —— for a Bishop* (an Overseer) *must be blamelesse as the steward of God.*] and therefore must be (*g*) faithfull, (*g*) 1 Cor. 4. 2. *It is required in Stewards, that a man be found faithfull.*] and administer their charge so, as to be (*h*) accountable unto him, (*h*) Heb. 13. 17. *Watch for your soules, as they that must give an account.*

Secondly, in respect of the Church, they must take (*i*) care of it, (*i*) 1 Tim. 3. 5. *If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?*] and that with (*k*) diligence, (*k*) Rom. 12. 8. *He that ruleth, with diligence.*

Thirdly, in respect of the Members thereof, they must (*l*) watch over them, (*l*) Heb. 13. 17. *They watch over your soules*] take pains for them, and (*m*) admonish them as occasion shall require, (*m*) 1 Thess. 5. 12. *Which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.*

Fourthly, in respect of the End of their imployment, they must be interessed and ingaged,

1. In the election, calling, and dimission of Officers to and from charges in the Church.
2. In the admission of worthy, and rejection of unworthy Members.

3. In

3. In the ordering of all matters of publike worship, to be dutifully and decently performed.
4. In the moderating of the carriage of matters at publike meetings, whereunto the Body of the Congregation is to be invited.
5. In the redressing of Scandals, by way of instruction, exhortation, admonition, or censure, if need be.
6. In the restoring of the penitent, in healing of breaches, in the preserving of all in the unity of the Spirit, in the helping of the weak to beare their burdens, and encouraging of every one in the wayes of truth and righteousnesse.
7. In the visiting of the (*n*) sick, especially when they are sent for; to give them comfort, and pray for them,

(*n*) Jam. 5. 14. *Is any man sick, let him call the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, &c.*

4. The manner how this office should be executed, is, That together with the Pastor, in all matters of Spirituall government, as well in the Consistoriall, as in the Classicall and Synodicall meetings, to give advise, and according to the Resolutions to act by common consent: and as the Pastor ought not to act by himself, without their knowledge, any things of common concernment; so much lesse ought they to act without his approbation, and the consent of each other, or at least of the major part of the Eldership, upon mature deliberation.

CHAP.

Chap. VI.

Some Rules taken from the Word of GOD, to shew, How the Elderships of a particular Church ought to settle the spirituall Government of the Flock committed to them.

1. The end and use of all Church-Offices and Government, is this; *Fitly to compact the members of Christs body together by that which every joynt supplieth; that it may grow up in Christ in all things, and edifie it self in love.* Ephes. 4. 15, 16.

2. To bring this to passe, as every one ought *to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called, in the unity of the Spirit with his Brethren,* Ephes. 4. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. So more especially ought the Officers of the Church thus to walke before others, *thinking soberly of themselves, according as God hath dealt unto them the measure of Faith,* and gift of Administration. *Rom.* 12. 3, 4, 5.

3. But if *two cannot walk together except they be agreed,* as the Prophet saith, *Amos* 3. 3. far lesse can many do so, except they be agreed: therefore in all undertakings an agreement is to be sought for. First amongst the Members of the Eldership within themselves; Secondly, between the Eldership and the Flock over which they are set; Thirdly, between one Church and its Neighbour-churches, if these at all be concerned in the matter; And lastly, between the Churches that are united and concerned in each other, and the Civil Magistrate, if the thing wherein they are agreed hath any reference unto the publique. And this Rule of proceeding is grounded upon these precepts: *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men,* Rom. 12. 18. *And give none offence neither to the Jewes nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God,* 1 Cor. 10, 32. *Let every one of us please his Neighbour, to his edification for good,* Rom. 15. 2. Phil. 2. 4.

4. To gain these Agreements, three things must be found and made apparent in every spirituall work of Government:

One

One, in the Matter; another, in the End thereof; and a third, in the Manner of performing it.

Firſt in the Matter, it muſt appeare, that the thing to be done is in it ſelf lawfull, that is, agreeable to the will and purpoſe of Chriſt, and no wayes prejudiciall to any of his lawes who is the onely (*a*) Lawgiver of the Church, (*a*) Jam. 4. 12. *There is one Law-giver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy,* Mat. 17. 5. *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed; heare ye him.* & Iſa. 33. 22. *The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our law-giver, the Lord is our King; he will ſave us.*

Secondly in the End, it muſt appeare, that the undertaking of the work is intended only as a duty towards God, and a ſervice of love (*b*) towards the Saints; (*b*) Gal. 5. 13. *By love ſerve one another.* & 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11. *As every man hath received the gift, ſo miniſter the ſame one to another,* as good ſtewards of the manifold graces of God——that God may be glorified in all things through Jeſus Chriſt.] and not as an act of power; for no man hath *dominion over another mans faith,* but *every one is bound to help another mans joy,* 2 Cor. 1. 24.

Thirdly, in the Manner of going about every work, two things muſt appeare——

1. That it is undertaken in an orderly courſe, towards thoſe firſt that are chiefly concerned therein, and then towards others by degrees; without prepoſterouſneſſe and precipitancie.

2. That the addreſſes which are made to every one of theſe in their proper places, are to be with all *lowlineſſe, meekneſſe, long-ſuffering, and forbearance in love, to the end than the unity of the Spirit may be kept entire in the bond of Peace,* Epheſ. 4. 12. 3. *And all vain-glory, and provocation to ſtrife, and envy being avoyded,* no offence may be given or taken at the work intended. *Phil.* 2. 3. *Gal.* 5. 26. 2 *Cor.* 6. 3, 4.

Thus then we muſt conclude: that in all acts of Government if the work be defective in any of theſe properties, there wil either be no agreement at all, or no long continuance thereof. Therefore theſe generall Rules muſt have an influence upon all particular Deliberations and Reſolutions, to make them effectuall. For the great point of difficulty in all acts of deliberation, is this; To order a mans thoughts within himſelf, to diſ-

cover

cover a duty: And in the matter of Execution, the difficulty is this; To order a mans wayes towards others, ſo as to find acceptance. Now by theſe Rules, by Gods aſſiſtanee, all theſe difficulties may be overcome. As for the particular acts of Government in themſelves, in admitting of Members to the Church, in making uſe of the Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven, in adminiſtring the Seals of the Covenant, in overſeeing the Flock, and addreſſing or redreſſing them in their duties; they ought not ſuddenly and haſtily to be medled withall, till theſe Fundamentals be well digeſted; for by the Method, which is in them preſcribed, they will prove ſucceſsfull. And in a word, nothing will ever be found commendable or warrantable, which in the undertaking, hath not a riſe from ſome cleer Rule in the Word; and in the application, is not proportionate to the capacity of thoſe to whom it is to be applied: for the Apoſtle doth inſtruct us by his example, to *become all things to all men, to winne ſome.* 1 Cor. 9. 22.

CHAP. VII.

Concerning the office and imployment of Deacons.

1. THe name of a *Deacon* is diverſly taken in the Scripture; (the Originall is Διάκονος) yet alwayes ſignifying one that is appointed for, or doth attend upon ſome ſervice: and according to the diverſity of the ſervice, the word is differently taken.

2. Sometime it is applied to common ſervice; ſometime to peculiar ſervice to be performed in the Church only. It is applied to common ſervice, *Mat.* 8. 15. where it is ſaid of *Peters* wives mother, that ſhe being cured of her fever, *roſe* and (διήκονει) *miniſtred unto them.* And in this ſenſe it is uſed, *Mat.* 20. 26. *He that will be great among you, let him be your miniſter,* (διάκονος.)

3. When it is applied to ſervice peculiarly belonging to the Church, it is again differently taken:

First, for the whole work which by Gods appointment is

to be performed in the Church, in all his Ordinances. So *Christ* is called, *Rom.* 15. 8. Διάκονος, *a Minister of the Circumcision*; so the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 6. 3, 4. doth call himself a Deacon of God, and his service (Διακονίαν) a Deaconship; we render it Ministery: the words are, *Giving none offence in any thing, that the Ministery* (Διακονία) *be not blamed, but in all things approving our selves as the Ministers* (Διάκονοι *Deacons*) *of God.* Here it takes in the Administration of the Word with the other service.

Secondly, it is taken for that part of the Ministery which is contradistinct to the Administration of the Word, and standeth wholly in matter of Action: in which sense it is taken, *Rom.* 12. 6, 7. where the Apostle doth distribute all the offices belonging to the Church into two kinds, into *Prophesie*, and into (Διακονία) *Ministery*. By the first he meaneth the whole dispensation of the Word; and by the second, all that which belongeth to matter of Action.

Thirdly, it is taken most properly for that part of Action and Church-service, which is distinct from the proper work of the Elders; and so it is here to be considered: and in this sense the quality of a Deacon is described, 1 *Tim.* 3. from *v.* 8. till 14.

4. This office was instituted by the Apostles at *Jerusalem*, to redresse an inconveniencie which did fall out in the *daily ministration*; namely the *neglect of* some *widowes* more then of others; by reason of which inequality there arose a murmuring and discontent, which by these Officers was remedied, as you may read more at large, *Acts* 6. *v.* 1. till 7.

5. The proper work then of the Deacons, is, To look to the provision which is made for the relief of the poor, that it be equally distributed according to their necessities; and to this effect, they are to receive and keep the collections which are made for that use; and they ought to visit, and consider the state of the poor and sick, that knowing their wants, the Eldership (and Congregation, if need be) may help to supply the same according to their ability.

6. They ought in the work of their charge to be subordinate unto the Eldership, upon whom the chief care of the Flock doth lie.

lie: For, to eaſe the chief Elders at Jeruſalem, they were created: and the reaſon why they were conſtituted to eaſe them, is ſtill in force; for the text ſaith thus, *Act.* 6. 1. *There aroſe a murmuring of the Grecians againſt the Hebrews, becauſe their widowes were neglected in the daily miniſtration.* Verſ. 2. *Then the Twelve called the multitude of the Diſciples unto them, and ſaid, it is not reaſon that we ſhould leave the Word of God, and ſerve tables.* v. 3. *Wherefore brethren, look ye out among you ſeven men of honeſt report, full of the Holy Ghoſt and wiſdome, whom we may appoint over this buſineſſe;* v. 4. *But we will give our ſelves continually to prayer, and the miniſtry of the Word.* From whence it appeareth, that the ſervice of tables (that is, to provide meat for the poor, and diſtribute unto them their portion) is not to be impoſed upon them that attend the labour of the Word and Prayer, but ought to be committed unto ſome others. And that theſe others are ſubordinate unto them, appeareth both by the nature of their imployment, which is about a matter of lower concernment; and by the manner of their admiſſion unto it, which was by the impoſition of the hands of the Elderſhip: for the Apoſtles did appoint them to their office, not only as Apoſtles, but as Elders of that congregation.

7. And becauſe they are thus ſubordinate unto the Elderſhip by their primitive conſtitution; therefore in the Reformed churches they are obliged to regulate their matters by the adviſe of the Elderſhip, to whom they are bound from time to time to ſhew the accounts of their receipts and diſburſments, and the condition of the poor who are to be relieved. [In the Synodical Acts of the French churches, *cap.*4. and in the Church-Orders of the Dutch churches, *art.*15.

8. And becauſe they are thus accountable unto the Elderſhip, they are bound to keep exact reckonings of their receipts and diſburſements. The Receipts come, in Foraigne churches, chiefly in *France* and *Low-Countries*, onely from free willing contributions, which at every meeting of the Congregation to heare the Word, are gathered by the Deacons; and the Diſburſements are indifferently to all the Poore who offer themſelves, but chiefly to thoſe of their owne Congregation.

9. In larger Congregations of the Foraign churches, the Eldership hath their meeting apart from the Deacons, & the Deacons meet ordinarily by themselves once or twice a week; but in lesser Congregations, the Elders and Deacons meet ordinarily all together at least once a week.

CHAP. VIII.

Concerning the Duty of Christians, as they are to be in a particular Church, and under the government of Rulers set over them in the Lord.

1. WE understand by Christians, men that have given up their names unto Christ, to be called (*a*) by his name, (*a*) Act. 11. 26. *The Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.* & Ephes. 3. 15. *Of whom the family in heaven and earth is named*; to call (*b*) upon him, (*b*) 1 Cor. 1. 2. *All that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ.*] by calling him (*c*) their Lord, (*c*) 1 Cor. 12. 3. *No man can say that Jesus Christ is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*

2. By a *Church*, is meant a congregation of such men called and gathered together by the Word; *Mat.* 13. 37. till 44. to be (*d*) separate from the world, (*d*) 2 Cor. 6. 17. *Come out from them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and I will receive you.* & Revel. 18. 4. *Come out of her* (viz. of Babylon) *my people*] and in the use of all *Christs ordinances, to be an habitation of God through the Spirit*, Ephes. 2. 19, 20, 21, 22.

3. The duty of Christians as visible professors of Christianity, doth stand in a threefold Relation;

The first is to the Church, as it is the Body of Christ.
The second is to the Eldership of that Church.
The third is to the Members thereof.

Of the first, viz. *Duties relating to the Body of Christ.*

4. All Christians that glory in the name of Christ, ought to appeare (*e*) for him amongst men, (*e*) Matth. 10. 32, 33. *Whosoever shall confesse me before men, him will I confesse also before my Father.*

Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.] And they ought so to appeare as he hath appointed, and not as they think good, or as men appoint. Mat. 15. 9. *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandements of men.*

5. Those that will appeare for *Christ*, ought to apply themselves to some particular Congregation professing Saintship, as Members thereof. Mat. 12. 30. *He that is not with me, is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.* Mat. 11. 28, 29. *Come unto me——take my yoke upon you.* Gal. 6. 10. *Them who are of the houshold of faith.* 1 Joh. 2. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us,* &c. Isa. 8. 16. *Binde up the Testimony, and seale the Law among my disciples.* 1 Cor. 1, 2. *Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified——called to be Saints.* & 1 Cor. 12. 27. *Ye are members in particular.*

6. It is foretold, that there should be many Congregations in the Church of the Gospel, and yet all upon the same Mount *Sion*, and under the same defence; and by Gods appointment to be as one Body, Isa. 4. 5. *Upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, there shall be a cloud and smoak by day, and the burning of a flaming fire by night.* Joh. 10. 16. *Other sheep, not of this fold, them I must bring——there shall be one fold and one shepherd.*

7. Now to understand the Relation which believing Professours have unto the Church, three things are to be considered. First, how every Believer doth stand, as to a particular Congregation. Secondly, how one Congregation doth stand as to another, in respect both of the Members and of the Rulers thereof. And thirdly, how Believers should apply themselves unto particular Congregations, and be received therein by their Eldership.

8. All Believers *are baptized by one Spirit into one Body*, 1 Cor. 12, 13. and in that one Body they are called to the enjoyment *of the Peace of God*, Coloss. 3. 15. and therein by God *set in their* severall *places*, 1 Cor. 12. 18. and *made members one of another*, Rom. 12. 4, 5. and *joyned* and *compacted together by joynts under their head Christ Jesus*, Ephes. 4. 16. whose Body is every

Of the first head; how believers stand in a particular congregation.

every congregation of believers, 1 Cor. 12. 27. *Now ye* (viz. Corinthians) *are the Body of Christ*, Rom. 12. 5. *So we* (viz. Romans) *are one Body in Christ*. And the Church universall, Ephes. 1. 22, 23. *the head over all things to the Church, which is his Body, the fulnesse of him that filleth all in all.*

9. From hence it is evident, that every believer is not only bound to make open profession of his faith, (as is *(f)* required *Rom.* 10. 9, 10.) *(f) If thou confesse with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousnesse, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*] but that in so doing he is bound to appeare in the communion of *(g)* Saints, *standing in one body fast together with* others, *& striving for the Faith of the Gospel*, Phil. 1, 27. *(g)* Ph. 2. 1, 2, 4. *If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit —— be ye like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*] And by this conjunction of Believers, when an Eldership is rightly set over them, particular Congregations are constituted. As *Act.* 14. 22, 23. The Apostles having converted the Gentiles to the faith, *ordained them Elders in every Church*, with prayer and fasting.

Of the second head, how Congregations doe stand one to another.

10. As single Believers are bound to associate themselves one to another; so ought every congregation of Believers to associate it self to its neighbour-congregation by the very same rules & bands by which particular Christians are bound to joyn themselves one to another. For if *all* Believers in the world *are baptized into one Body*, 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. and if all are *called to the Peace of God in that one Body*, *Col.* 3. 15. and are bound to *endeavour the Unity of the Spirit one towards another, in the Bond of that Peace*, because there is but *one Body of Christ* in all the world, *Ephes.* 4. 1, 2, 3, 4. which is homogeneall (that is, of the same kinde) in all the members thereof: And if this *whole Body* is to *be fitly joyned and compacted together by that which every joint supplieth*, *Ephes.* 4. 16. Then ought none of all the congregations of Believers to stand separate one from another, but are bound to unite themselves by their joynts (that is their Officers) so neer as possibly they can, in all Spirituall relations, for their *mutuall edification in love*, Ephes. 4. 16.

11. So

11. So then, every true Believer that hath made open profession of his faith, by being a member of any one Congregation, hath a right of membership unto all the congregations of the world, because all are *but one in Christ*, Gal. 3. 28. and all have *one and the same accesse unto the Father*, and are *fellow-citizens*, and of the *same household of Faith*, Ephes. 2. 19. *In respect of their Members.*

12. It is then contrary to the mind of Christ, that those who make profession of the same faith, and worship in the same way, should stand either single by themselves, and not imbodyed with other professors; or stand so imbodyed with some, as to be disjoynted from other bodies of the same profession.

13. Nor ought any Church-officers to take upon them such a Relation to any particular Body, as to think themselves obliged unto none but unto the members thereof, in their Ministeriall charges; for if they do so, they make themselves to be no joints in the body of Christ, (which every officer is bound to be) and they hinder the *compacting of the whole together*, which is contrary to the end of their imployment, *Ephes.* 4. 13. 16. and they open a door to the *cunning craftinesse* of *men who lie in wait to deceive*; that it *may seduce the simple and plain-hearted believer, and unsettle him.* Ephes. 4. 14. Rom. 16. 18. *In respect of their Officers.*

14. All Christians applying themselves unto a particular congregation, ought to come thereunto free, *willingly, in the beauty of holinesse*, Psal. 110. 3. and not upon any other considerations then the love of Holinesse, *Psal.* 84. *Of the third head, how believers should apply themselves to a particular Congregation.*

15. If any that are eminent in the world, do stand upon the points of Honour, thinking that they have a right to the priviledges of the kingdom of *Christ*, by reason of their places in the world; and that it would be unbeseeming to them to offer themselves to be admitted into a particular congregation: They do greatly mistake the nature of Gods kingdom, & the state of true Honour; for none are truly excellent & honourable but (*h*) Saints, (*h*) Psal. 16. 3. *The Saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight*] and the Godly, *whom God hath set apart for himself*, Psal. 4. 2, 3. Now the *Kingdome of Christ is not of this world*, Joh. 18. 37. nor can it be entertained with the worldly respects (*i*) of persons, (*i*) Jam. 2. 1, 2. *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of glory,*

With-

with respect of persons; For if there come into your Assembly a man with a gold ring in goodly apparell, and there come in also a poore man in vile raiment, v. 3. *and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay cloathing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstoole,* v. 4. *are ye not then partiall in your selves, and become judges of evill thoughts?*] Because the world, and all that is in it, is either wholly opposite (*k*) unto Christianity, and *doth lie in wickednesse*, 1 Joh. 5. 19. (*k*) Gal. 6. 14. *But God forbid that I should glory save in the crosse of the Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* & 1 Cor. 3. 19. *The Wisdome of this world is foolishnesse with God.*] or else, at the best, (*l*) subordinate unto it. (*l*) & 1 Cor. 3. 22. *whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods.* As if he had said, Christ is subordinate unto God, ye are subordinate unto Christ, the world and all things in it are subordinate to your use in reference to Christ. Therefore it can be no disparagement to any in the world to apply themselves to Christ in his ordinances; but it will be their greatest honour, to exalt him; for such as *confesse him before men, he will confesse before his heavenly Father and his holy Angels*, Mat. 10. 32. Luk. 12. 8.

16. Nor do the Saints by their profession of being separate from the world, make voyd any of the lawes of nature; because they are commanded to be *subject unto every ordinance of man for the Lords sake*, 1 Pet. 2. 13. And the Lord of glory himselfe (though not bound) did submit, by paying tribute, unto the ordinance of *Cæsar*, Mat. 17. 24, 25, 26, 27. and *hath commanded all to give unto Cæsar what is Cæsars, and unto God what is Gods*, Mat. 22. 15. till *v.* 22. Now to *Cæsar* is due (*m*) submission, and (*n*) honour. (*m*) Rom. 13. 1. *Let every soule be subject to the Higher powers.* & 1 Pet. 2. 13. *Submit your selves——unto the King as supreme, or unto Governours as unto them that are sent by him.* (*n*) 1 Pet. 2. 17. *Honour the King.*] As then by the Kingdom of Christ none of the great ones of the world lose any respect due unto them, but rather receive an increase of Honour; so they ought not to refuse to yield unto Christ the respect

which

which is due unto Him, and his Kingdom; for by giving themselves up to it, they are set above themselves, that is, out of the world and the respects of it.

17. Every one then that will be called a Christian (whatsoever they are amongst men, it maketh no matter, God accepteth no mans person) is bound as a Christian to offer himself to be imbodyed into a Congregation, and to partake of the priviledges of the household of Faith, and ought professedly to (*o*) subject himself unto the Gospel, [(*o*) 2 Cor. 9. 13. *They glorifie God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ.*] and give (*p*) himself over unto the Lord, and by the will of God unto that Eldership whereunto he doth make his application. [(*p*) 2 Cor. 8. 5. *They gave their own selves unto the Lord, and unto us, by the will of God.* & Act. 2. 41, 42. *There was added* (viz. unto the Church) *three thousand soules; and they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

18. Such as offer themselves in this manner unto the Eldership, ought to be received without much (*q*) difficulty or scrupulosity, [(*q*) Rom. 14. 1. *Him that is weak in the Faith, receive you, but not to doubtfull disputations.*] even as Christ (*r*) received us, [(*r*) Rom. 15. 7. *Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.*] And such as *come to him*, he saith *he will in no wise cast out*, Joh. 6. 37. *And how they should be received therein.*

19. Now concerning the outward form and manner of admitting Professors unto the holy Communion, and distinguishing them from those that are without; we find nothing distinctly enjoyned in the Word, or extant in the practice of the Apostles: Therefore that which may concern this matter, is conceived to be left free unto the discretion of the Eldership, as they shall think it most fit, for the edification and capacity of those with whom they have to do.

And herein the customes of the Reformed churches, in respect of circumstantials, are found to be different; yet, in the main, their agreement is this——

1. That every one who for the first time is to be admitted unto the Holy communion, is to be examined in respect of his knowledge and conversation; although from his infancie he

hath been borne, baptized, and bred in the Congregation.

2. If he come from abroad; having years of discretion and judgement fit to examine himself, it is expected he should have a testimoniall of his former life and conversation, and of his diligence in attending the Ordinances in the place where he hath lived. And being found knowing in the fundamentall truths of Christianity, he is desired

First, to declare that his purpose is to live and die in the communion of the Reformed churches.

Secondly, to promise, that if he should conceive any scruples of the Doctrine that is taught in the Reformed churches, he shall not conceale his doubts, and fall away from the Fellowship into which he is received; but make the same known unto his Teachers, to receive satisfaction therein.

Thirdly, to oblige himself to use all carefull diligence to honour and adorn his profession with his life and conversation, and to avoyd all occasion of scandall.

Fourthly and lastly, to promise to submit himself unto the Rules of Church-discipline, according to the Word; and to respect those that are set over him in the Lord.

All which he is engaged to do by word of mouth, and by giving his hand unto the Eldership.

In some places, this admission of Members is left to the Pastor, to be performed in private; yet so, as the reception of the party must be notified unto, and ratified by, the Eldership. In some places, all is done before the whole Eldership. In some places also, the names of those that are admitted, are published unto the whole Congregation from the Pulpit.

Of the second, viz. *Duties relating to the Eldership.*

20. Such as have given up their names unto a Congregation to be under a Pastorall charge, and the government of an Eldership, ought to hear (*s*) the voice of their Pastors, (*s*) Joh. 10. 3. *The sheep hear his voice.*] To (*t*) follow them, (*t*) Ibid. v. 4. *The sheep follow him, for they know his voice.*] To continue (*u*) in their fellowship, and not to follow strangers, (*u*) Act. 2. 42. *They continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship.*]

Yet

Yet by this they are not deprived of the liberty of hearing others beſides their own Paſtors, that they may (*x*) prove all things, and hold faſt that which is good, (*x*) 1 Theſſ. 5. 21. *Prove all things, hold faſt that which is good.*

21. They ought to obey their Rulers (*y*) & ſubmit themſelves unto them; that their work may be done with joy, and not with grief, (*y*) Heb. 13. 17. *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves, for they watch——That they may do it with joy, and not with grief.*

22. This obedience and ſubmiſſion ought not to be formall, but hearty, proceeding from (*z*) a high eſteem of them in love for their works ſake, (*z*) 1 Theſſ. 5. 13. *Eſteem them* (viz. thoſe that labour, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you) *very highly in love for their works ſake.*

23. As an inward affection and eſteem, ſo an outward care for their Rulers is requiſite in Profeſſors: They ought then to *communicate unto thoſe that teach them in all good things*, Gal. 6. 6. counting all that Rule well, *worthy of double honour; but eſpecially* to provide maintenance for *thoſe that labour in the word and doctrine*, 1 Tim. 5. 17. becauſe the Lord hath ordained *that thoſe who preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel*, 1 Cor. 9. 14.

24. They ought *to mark and avoyd all Teachers that cauſe offences and diviſions amongſt them*; Rom. 16.

Of the third, viz. *Duties relating to their Fellow-members.*

25. They ought to conſider their fellow-members; to *provoke them to love and to good works; not forſaking the aſſembling of themſelves together, as the manner of ſome is.* Heb. 10. 24, 25.

26. They ought to *hold forth the word of life, and ſhine as lights in the world in the midſt of a crooked generation*, Phil. 2. 15.

27. To this effect they ought to do all things without *murmurings and diſputings, that they may be found blameleſſe as the children of God*, Phil. 2. 14.

28. They ought to *ſerve their brethren through love*, Gal. 5. 13. and *not to pleaſe themſelves, but others for their good to edification*, Rom. 15. 1, 2.

29. They ought not either to *despise* or *judge* one another for matters which God hath left free, either to be done, or not to be done, according as God doth give every one the measure of faith. *Rom.*14. the whole chap.

30. They ought to *withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and is a busie body*, 2 Thess. 3.6, 11. yet they ought not to *count him an enemy, but should admonish him as a Brother*, ibid. v.15.

Chap. IX.

Certain Rules concerning the Administration of the LORDS *Supper, for the decent ordering of the action.*

Offered to the consideration of those that scruple at the gesture of Sitting.

1. IT is not lawfull for us, in Gods worship, to do what we think good in our own eyes; but what is most agreeable to his will.

2. For if we know not what his will is, we cannot worship him in Faith.

3. If we worship him not in faith, we cannot please him.

4. And if we please him not, we cannot expect a blessing upon our performance.

5. Therefore to be sure of a blessing, we must know and carefully observe that which is most answerable to his will, in things belonging to his worship.

6. Now to know and observe this in the Sacrament of the Lords supper; Christs practise in the institution thereof, so far as he would have us to imitate the same, and his intention in commanding us to imitate him therein, is to be considered.

7. The necessity of considering Christs practise and intention in this matter, doth arise from the Apostles commandement, who doth herein very distinctly referre us unto Christ himselfe for a warrant of that which is to be done; saying, that in this matter, he *delivered that which he received of the Lord*, 1 Cor. 11. 23. and that we ought *to follow him so far as he is a follower of the Lord*, ibid. v.1.

8. There-

8. Therefore we are bound to look unto Christ in the first place; and to the Apostles afterward, with a reference unto the Lord: because finally our faith must rest only in the Lord, as the object thereof; and the end and use of the Apostolicall ministery is, to call us unto communion with them; that by them *we may have communion with the Father, and with his Sonne Jesus Christ*, 1 Joh. 1. 3. For we are sure, that in following him and fulfilling his intention, we do nothing amisse; because He is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, Joh. 14. 6.

9. Christs practise then in the institution of his Supper, in that which is to be imitated, is this——

First, he took the Bread, and by giving speciall thanks over it, he separated it from the common to a holy use; then he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and commanded them to eat thereof.

Secondly, he took the Cup, which in like manner by a speciall blessing he separated from the common to a holy use; and then gave it to his Disciples, commanding them all to drink of it.

Thirdly, this bread and cup the Lord did distribute being at the table with his Disciples, where he spake with them of his death and of the fruits thereof, and of his comming again, as you may see more at large in *Matth.* 26. from *vers.* 20. till 36. *Mark* 14. from *v.* 18. till 32. *Luk.* 22. from *v.* 19. till 39. and in *John*, the whole chapters, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. are to be compared with the other three Evangelists, and taken in as the matter of his table-discourse.

10. Next unto this practise of the Lord, the Apostolicall practise, which in the Primitive church did herein follow the Lord, is considerable; that we may observe thereby what is properly imitable in the Lords practise, by the Church.

11. Let us look upon that which the Apostle *Paul* delivereth unto the church of *Corinth*, Epist. 1. chap. 10, 11. I shall open the places briefly, and then make some observations upon them.

In *chap.* 10. the Apostles scope is, to dissuade the Corinthians from symbolizing with Idolaters in eating of things sacrificed unto idols. The parts of the chapter are two: First, he forbids a mixt communion with Idolaters in things pertaining to their Idol-worship, as such; from *v.* 1. till 23. Secondly, he permits

unto

unto them a mixt converſation with Idolaters, in eating and drinking even of thoſe things which they had offered unto idols, with this caution, if it were done without offence unto weaker brethren, from *v.*23. till the end.

Amongſt other arguments uſed to diſſwade them from partaking with idolaters in their Idol-worſhip, one is taken from their engagement to celebrate the Lords ſupper, and from the relation which they had to the Lord in it, and to one another. This is expreſſed from *v.* 15. till 22. where firſt he ſtirs them up to attention, and to a ſerious conſideration of that which he was to ſay. *I ſpeak as to wiſe men* (ſaith he) *judge ye what I ſay*, v. 15. Then he declareth unto them three things; and by the anſwer of a doubt, doth conclude his dehortation.

Firſt he ſheweth what is meant by the uſe of the Elements in the Lords ſupper. *The cup of bleſſing* (ſaith he) *which we bleſſe, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? and the bread which we breake, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt?* verſ. 16. As if he had ſaid, What do you mean by bleſſing the cup, and breaking the bread at the Lords ſupper? for what end and purpoſe is it inſtituted? Is it not to evidence that you have communion with Chriſt in his body and blood, as his ſpirituall members belonging to him?

Secondly he ſheweth what is meant by their joynt partaking of the Elements. *We being many* (ſaith he) *are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread*, v. 17. As if he had ſaid; although in our ſelves we are many and diſtinct perſons, yet in reference to Chriſt we are (as of old the ſhew-bread was to the Lord) but one bread, and one myſticall body; becauſe we all jointly do partake of that one bread which in a myſterie is his body. And this is brought in as a reaſon to confirme the foregoing point; *For* (ſaith he) *we being many, are one bread*, &c. that is, The reaſon why the bleſſing of the cup and breaking of the bread doth mean and import a communion with Chriſt in his blood & body, is cleer from our mutual relation and the conjunction wherein we ſtand one to another, by this action jointly performed; which is this: That we all by it reſpecting each other in Chriſt, evidence our ſelves to be one bread and one body to him. So then hereby we plainly atteſt our communion with him,

him, seeing by this action, as relating unto him, we have communion one with another.

Thirdly, he sheweth what is meant by the eating of Sacrifices. v. 18. *Behold* (saith he) *Israel after the flesh; are not they which eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar?* As if he had said: consider the custome of the Jews after the flesh in their sacrifices, and the ordinance that God gave unto them concerning the eating of holy things: Their custome is, that such as eat of the Sacrifices, have communion with the Altar, and partake in the worship by which the sacrifices are offered up unto God; and if you look upon Gods ordinance given to the Priests concerning holy things, *Levit.* 22. from *v.* 10. till 17. you shall see that all strangers are expressly forbidden to partake thereof, and that none but such as had a reference to the altar might eat of them; the Lord intimating, and the custome of the Nation confirming it, that the eating of sacrifices is not a common action, but a matter of worship importing a communion with the Altar.

From all which the Apostle doth tacitely insinuate thus much: That as the chief thing aimed at in the Lords supper, is to evidence our communion with Christ, and with one another in reference to him; and the cleer purpose of the Jews in eating of sacrifices, was to manifest their relation unto the Altar as partakers of the worship and service done at it; So the meaning and intent of eating things sacrificed unto Idols, must be, to have communion with the altar of the Idol, and the idolatrous worship performed thereat. This inference is not expressed, but only intimated, till a doubt be proposed and answered.

The doubt is proposed *v.* 19. thus: *What say I then* (saith he) *that the Idol is any thing? or that which is offered in sacrifice to Idols is any thing?* As if he had said: I do not intend to intimate unto you by this, that an Idol is that which hath a reall being; *for we know that an Idol is nothing in the world*, 1 Cor. 8. 4, 8. consequently, I do not say that the things offered in sacrifice unto Idols are any thing in reference to worship, further then the imagination of the Idolater doth fancie them to be; which giveth no being to any thing. So then in the proposall of the doubt, he doth cleerly deny that which it seemeth to suppose; and then for a fuller answer unto it, he doth shew his cleer

meaning,

meaning concerning the sacrifices of the Gentiles, and inferreth from thence as a conclusion, that their duty was, not to partake thereof.

His meaning concerning the sacrifices of the Gentiles, is, *v.*20. in these words: *But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice unto devils* (Demons) *and not unto God.* As if he had said; But my meaning is, to declare that the purpose of the Gentiles is to worship their Demons, which are Devils, or imaginary, and not the true Gods.

Whereupon he inferreth his dehortatory conclusion thus: *And I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.* As if he said; Because the meaning and purpose of partaking of Sacrifices, is to have communion in Worship; and it is evident that the Gentiles do worship Demons, which are devils, or imaginary gods; therefore I dissuade you from having any communion with them. And he giveth the reason why he doth dissuade them from this, *v.* 21. in these words: *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of Devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lords table, and of the table of Devils*; As if he had said, I dissuade you from this, because you cannot stand under two opposite relations, and have communion with two opposites at one and the same time. The relation which you have unto Christ, and their relation to the Devils, are opposite; therefore you cannot stand under both at once, you cannot maintain communion with both at once; but if you partake of the cup and table of the one, you must abstain from the cup and table of the other.

13. Thus having opened the words; the observations which I will briefly make upon them, are these——

First, we may gather from hence, that to symbolize with Idolaters in their acts of worship, is a thing unlawfull to Christians. We know that the Masse is the greatest idol that ever was in the world; and that the act of kneeling was brought in at the Popish communion to worship that Idol: we ought not therefore to symbolize with them in that act of worship; for it is not lawfull for us to follow the corruption of an Ordinance, when we have Christs imitable practise made known to us: It is not lawfull to mixe the acts of Gods true worship, with the chief act

of

of an Idol-worſhip, ſuch as is Kneeling at the *Maſſe*; For the meaning and purpoſe of kneeling, is Adoration; the object of adoration is the Body and blood of Chriſt, ſuppoſed to be in the Elements: but if we believe no ſuch reall preſence as they have fancied, then we make void the object of adoration, and conſequently the act intended towards it is diſanulled alſo. But if any doth incline to kneeling, becauſe it hath been a cuſtome hitherto uſed; he may upon the ſame ground practiſe all other Popiſh idolatries and ſuperſtitions. But if you will ſay, that you think Chriſt ought to be worſhipped there, and that you cannot come to his table with too much reverence; You muſt underſtand, that Chriſt doth not intend to be worſhipped there, but to be received; and that you muſt not be led by your own thinking, but by the manifeſtation of his will in matters of worſhip; nor can any one geſture be accounted reverence to him more then another, otherwiſe then as he doth appoint it to be in his worſhip. The ſtanding at the firſt Paſſeover in Egypt, was a reverence; The ſitting at the table with Chriſt, was in his diſciples a reverence to him; nay, and their ſuffering of him to waſh their feet, as their ſervant, was a reverence due to him as their maſter, becauſe it was his will to have it ſo. It is neither circumciſion nor uncircumciſion, but the doing of Gods will, that maketh us acceptable unto him. Now it is contrary to his will, that we ſhould follow another example of worſhip then that which his Apoſtles have given us: It is contrary to his will, that we in his worſhip ſhould ſymbolize with Idolaters, and that we ſhould ſeem to collude with them in their act of Idol-worſhip, when we know that the Lord will not be adored, but received in his Supper; and it is no reverence at all, but a very irreverent and unbeſeeming behaviour, to put forth an act proper to adoration, when he doth call us to put forth an act of communion and fellowſhip.

The ſecond obſervation is; That the eating of bread, and drinking of a cup at the Lords ſupper, is a Table-action. This is to be gathered from *verſ.* 17. *We are partakers of one Bread*; & *v.* 21. *Partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of Devils.* Theſe expreſſions are here uſed with a reference to the aime of fellowſhip and communion: whence I inferre theſe concluſions.

1. Seeing the act of Communion is to be evidenced chiefly by the partaking of one Bread by many; it doth follow, that the more that bread, and the partaking of it is one, the more the act of communion is evidenced. Then it followeth also, that the partaking of the bread ought to be as much one, as the nature of a Meal doth permit, and as Christ by his example doth insinuate. Now the nature of a Meal, doth not only permit, but require, that such as have fellowship in it, should be together as guests to partake jointly of it; and Christs example doth clearly shew that all his Disciples were in fellowship together with him at a table. And therefore to partake of one bread, and of the Lords table, must be understood to be such a table-action as is proper unto guests at a table. From whence it will follow, that to carry the bread and wine up and down the house, to persons sitting in severall pewes, as in so many little chambers of that house, is not at all sutable to the celebrating of the Lords supper, because it doth wholly take away the manifestation of that fellowship which the Lord would have evidenced in it. Those that eat their bread apart, in severall petty corporations, do not shew forth that they are one bread; as the Shewbread was, which was to be set before the Lord upon the holy table in the Sanctuary, *Exod.*25.30. & *Levit.*24.*v.*5. till 10. Which Bread did represent the whole Congregation of *Israel* united as one unto the Lord, in twelve cakes set upon one table; which type is now fulfilled in the Gospel, by the joynt presentation of the reall members of Christ as one bread at his table, to his Father, to be a living sacrifice unto him. Nor can it be said that those who sit in their pewes at a distance from each other, are one Body, as men use to be at Meales; for at meales none are one body properly, but such as eat together at the same table: Therefore this custome is not sutable to that which is to be evidenced at the partaking of the Lords table.

2. To shew an act of Communion, we must partake of the Bread as it is one. Now the bread is not one otherwise then as it is upon the same table, and blessed with the same Blessing: therefore it will follow, that the partaking of it as one, must be to receive it at the table, in a table-action: For if a Table is appointed to shew that we are to be at Christs supper as his guests;

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and if it be asked what Christ would have his guests to do? the answer must be taken from *Luke* 22.30. That he would have them *eat and drink with him at his table in his Kingdome.* To eat and drink (then) at his table, is to be his guest; and not to have a bit of meat brought from the table. If *Lazarus* the begger lying at the rich mans gate, had received a dish of meat from his table, it would not have made him one of his guests: but the other *Lazarus* of *Bethany* who sate with Christ at table, *Joh.* 12. was properly a fellow-guest (or perhaps Christs host) because he did eat with him at the table. To have fellowship then in partaking of the table, is to be at the table, and to do the action proper to a table: But to carry the bread and drink from the table, to give it to every one apart, is contrary to this Table-action, and therefore not to be practised any longer, in this time of Reformation.

3. The table of the Lord, and the table of Devils, are set as paralled in opposition to each other; therefore to partake of the one, and of the other, are made contraries directly inconsistent together; and being actions directly contrary, they must be of one kind; and if of one kind, then the table-action used at the one, was the same with the action used at the other. Now it is known that at the Idol-sacrifices, such as were invited, did sit and feast at a table, 1 *Cor.* 8.10. *Sit at meat in the Idols temple.* And it was the custom of all ages to have a feast upon a sacrifice; you may see it at *Jacob* and *Labans* parting, *Gen.* 31. 54. and at the *Moabites* friendship which they made with *Israel*, *Numb.* 25.1,2. And to this the strumpet doth allude, *Prov.* 7.14. and in *Psal.* 22. *v.* 25, 26. the same thing is intimated by the promise of a Spirituall meal whereby the soules of believers shall be satisfied and live for ever. If then to partake of the table of devils, and of Christs table, are parallels in opposition; and if it is evident not only by the known custome, but by the Apostles expression, 1 *Cor.* 8.10. that in partaking of the Idols table, *they did sit at meat in the Idol-temple*; then it will follow, that those who did partake of the Lords table, did sit at meat in the Lords temple: For the Apostle shewing what he means by partaking in respect of the one table, doth also explain that which is to be understood by the same word in respect of the other.

The third observation is, that the Apostle saith, *We all are partakers*. *We all*, sheweth that their custome was to be in a Body, and as a Body to partake; and that the whole Body did partake at once, so neer as could be. From whence not only the separate partaking, but the single partaking also is condemned as a thing unsutable to the Lords supper. The practise then of the Masse-Priest to take the bread and wine alone in publike, is hereby condemned; and the private administration of the Lords supper to the sick (which some ignorantly and superstitiously crave, as a *Viaticum itineris supremi*, (so they call it) the provision for their last journey) is a corruption of the ordinance: For the words *Many* and *All*, which the Apostle doth use here, exclude the Administration unto one alone.

14. In the eleventh chapter of this same Epistle, from *v.* 17. till the end, the Apostle doth speak of the celebrating of the Lords supper; and his scope is cleerly, to rectifie the abuses and disorders which were crept in amongst the Corinthians in the use of that ordinance: I shall open the text, and then make observations.

First then, *v.* 17. he reproves them in generall, that they *came together not for the better, but for the worse*; namely, for the abuse of this ordinance.

Then in particular, he tells them what their faults were, correcting them for the same; and instructs them in their duty, shewing how the ordinance should be observed.

He discovers their faults, from *vers.* 18. till 22. which are these——

First, that they were divided in sects, *v.* 18, 19. *For first of all* (saith he) *when ye come together in the Church, I heare that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it; for there must be also heresies* (sects) *among st you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*

Secondly, that they did not come together so much to eat the Lords supper, as their own suppers; and that in a divided and excessive way, *v.* 20, 21. *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lords supper; for in eating, every one taketh before other his own supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunken.* As if he had said; When ye come together,

ye

ye do not ſeem to intend the obſervation of Chriſts ordinance, but the taking of your own meals in ſeverall companies, in a diſorderly divided way, and with exceſſe of eating and drinking in ſome, when others are faſting and hungry. Your faults then are, that you come not only divided in opinions and affections, but in your actions and behaviour, you change the Lords ſupper into an ordinary meale; and theſe your meales are taken ſeparately, and in taking of them ſome are exceſſive in drinking, and glut themſelves, while others who partake not with them are hungry. Thus their faults are opened.

The correction of theſe faults, is in *verſ.* 22. *What* (ſaith he) *have ye not houſes to eat and to drink? or deſpiſe ye the Church of God, and ſhame them that have not? What ſhall I ſay to you? Shall I praiſe you in this? I praiſe you not.* As if he had ſaid, Do you not know that ye ought not to come together in the Church to eat an ordinary meale? are not private meales to be taken at home in your houſes? By this meanes you make the Church of God contemptible, and the ſociety of Saints a common thing; and you make them aſhamed, that have not made proviſion for entertaining themſelves plentifully as ſome of you do. You diſhonour then the houſe of God, and ſhame your brethren; you deſerve greatly to be blamed for all this, wherein you are extreme faulty.

Having thus laid their faults open, and corrected them for the ſame; he inſtructs them in their duty, ſhewing them how the Ordinance ſhould be obſerved, in reference to three things. 1. In reſpect of the ordinance in it ſelf, to imitate Chriſts inſtitution. 2. In reſpect of their private preparation, to partake thereof worthily. 3. In reſpect of their publike meeting, to perform the action orderly in the Congregation. The firſt part of the inſtruction concerns the things to be done by Chriſts appointment; the ſecond part, and the third, concerne the perſons doing the ſame, to direct them in the manner of performance, which hath two duties; the one preparatory, wherein every one is apart to fit himſelf for the ordinance; the other executory, wherein all of them are to fit themſelves each towards other in their meeting to that effect.

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The doctrine concerning the Ordinance it ſelf, is *verſ.* 23, 24, 25, 26. where firſt he ſhewes by what authority he doth deliver this doctrine: *For* (ſaith he) *I have received of the Lord that which I have delivered unto you.* Secondly, he relates unto them what Chriſt did and ſaid in the inſtitution of the Ordinance. Thirdly, he declares unto them what the meaning of their action was, in imitating that which Chriſt did, and remembring what He ſaid.

Chriſts actions and ſpeeches are diſtinctly related, in reſpect of the time, and in reſpect of the things done and ſaid by him at that time.

The time was, the night wherein he was betrayed. *That the Lord Jeſus in the ſame night wherein he was betrayed,* v. 23.

The things done and ſaid by him, relate the two parts of the Ordinance: the firſt, concerning the Bread; the ſecond, concerning the Cup.

Concerning the Bread, he did three things: He took it, he gave thanks over it, and then brake it. *v.* 23, 24. *Took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it.*

Concerning the Bread, he ſpake three words: First, a word of command, *Take and eat.* Secondly, a word of inſtitution and conſecration, ſhewing what was meant by the bread, *This* (*viz.* bread) *is my Body which is broken for you.* And thirdly, a word of direction, inſtructing them what to do, and to what end they ſhould do it; *Do this in remembrance of me.* v. 24.

Concerning the Cup he relates in like manner that which the Lord did and ſaid.

That which he did, is expreſſed in theſe words: *After the ſame manner alſo he took the Cup, when he had ſupped,* v. 25.

That which he ſpake, is in theſe words: *ſaying, this Cup is the New Teſtament in my Blood:* Here is the word of inſtitution and conſecration. And, *This do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me:* this is the word of commandement, and of direction. *v.* 25.

Hitherto the Apoſtle hath delivered what Chriſt did and ſaid at the appointment of this ordinance: Now, in the verſe following,

ing, he delivers unto them doctrinally, what the true meaning and intent of their action is in celebrating the Lords ſupper. *For* (ſaith he) *as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye ſhew the Lords death till he come.* As if he had ſaid, Chriſt having thus appointed his laſt ſupper to be celebrated, by the breaking of bread, and partaking of the cup, for a remembrance of him, and of that which he hath done for us: your imitation of him in this ordinance, in the nature of it, is a ſhewing forth of his death; a teſtimoniall of your faith in his death, till he come again to receive you into life.

This is the doctrine which is delivered concerning the Ordinance it ſelf, as it is to be celebrated in imitation of Chriſt. Followeth, the doctrine delivered concerning the way to do this worthily, both in reſpect of every Member by himſelfe in particular, and in reſpect of the Body of the Congregation in common.

The particular Members are taught, 1. What the guilt is of unworthy partaking. 2. How this guilt is to be avoyded. 3. What the puniſhment of unworthy partaking is; with the cauſe deſerving it, and the effect following thereupon. 4. And how both the puniſhment, and the dangerous effect of it is prevented.

Concerning the guilt of unworthy partaking, the Apoſtle doth inferre it as a conſequence from the foregoing doctrines, thus——*verſ.27.*

Wherefore whoſoever ſhall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

That is; Seeing the Lord hath ordained, that the eating of this his bread, and the drinking of his cup, ſhall be the memoriall of his body broken, and of his blood ſhed for us; therefore if any man doth not partake thereof anſwerably to this end, and as it becommeth thoſe that celebrate the memoriall of his death till his comming; he ſhall be guilty before the Lord of his body and blood, as if he were one of thoſe that dealt with him unworthily, and put him to death with wicked & profane hands.

The way to avoyd this guilt, is to come with a previous examination of our ſelves: this is taught, *v.*28. in theſe words:

But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. As if he had ſaid; But if you will free your ſelves from this guilt, you muſt come with due preparation of heart unto the action of the Lords ſupper; and this preparation muſt be a tryall of your ſtate in the preſence of God, ſo as to approve your ſelves in all things to be anſwerable unto his will, in fulfilling the purpoſe of this ordinance.

Concerning the puniſhment due unto the unworthy partakers, the Apoſtle teacheth them that it is the judgement of damnation, *v.*29. *For* (ſaith he) *he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf.* As if he had ſaid; Be carefull thus to examine and approve your ſelves in the uſe of this ordinance unto God, to anſwer his will; for if you do not ſo, but come unworthily, you ſhall by your eating and drinking procure a judgement of damnation to your ſelves, as a juſt puniſhment of your ſinne.

The cauſe deſerving this puniſhment, is their neglect of reſpect and reverence due to God and his ordinance: the Apoſtle calls it, *v.*29. the *not diſcerning the Lords body*; that is, the want of care and reſpect due to the body of the Lord, not taking notice of the dignity and worth of it, nor diſcerning Gods purpoſe in offering it to us, but uſing it as a common thing, doth deſerve this puniſhment.

The effect following upon this cauſe, in them was, that many of them were weak and ſick, and aſleep. *v.* 30. *For this cauſe* (ſaith he) *many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.* As if he had ſaid; And becauſe the puniſhment of condemnation is due unto you, therefore God doth afflict you, to ſhew his diſpleaſure, with outward judgements upon you in the fleſh.

The means to prevent theſe evils are two: the firſt is our duty, which may prevent the temporall chaſtiſement; the ſecond is Gods dealing with us, to prevent the eternall puniſhment.

Our duty is to judge our ſelves, whereunto a promiſe is made, that if we perform it, we ſhall not be judged of God. *v.*31. *For if we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged.* As if he had ſaid; Theſe judgements of God befall unto you, becauſe you take not heed to your wayes in his ſervice; for if you did judge and condemne your ſelves by repentance for your faults, God would

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not thus judge you with ſuch chaſtiſements.

Gods dealing with us to prevent the eternall evill of the deſerved puniſhment, is, by ſuch chaſtiſements to free us from being condemned with the world. *v.*32. *But when* (ſaith he) *we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world.* As if he had ſaid, However theſe chaſtiſements are juſtly inflicted, and judgements befalling us for want of care to judge our ſelves, and ſhew that we deſerve damnation; yet God doth not inflict them otherwiſe then as a Father doth, to correct us and chaſtiſe us in love, that we may not be condemned finally with the world.

Thus he hath inſtructed them how every one ſhould in private behave himſelf in reſpect of this ordinance: Now in the two laſt verſes of the chapter, he doth inſtruct them alſo how they ſhould behave themſelves in publike; and referres them to his comming, for other matters.

Concerning their publike behaviour in the Church, he ordains two things: Firſt, that they ſhould tarry one for another, and not eat ſeparately; Secondly, that they ſhould not eat to ſatisfie their hunger, in the church, but at their houſes.

Concerning the firſt he ſaith thus, *verſ.* 33. *Wherefore my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.* Concerning the ſecond he ſaith thus, *verſ.*34. *And if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto condemnation.* As if he had ſaid; Well then, my brethren, let me exhort you to celebrate the Ordinance jointly, and not ſeverally: and to that effect ſtay till you are all met together, to eat bread as one body and company of Saints; and beware, under pain of condemnation, not to uſe this as an ordinary meale to ſatisfie your hunger, but uſe it only for the end to which Chriſt hath appointed it; and if you be hungry, ſatisfie your appetite at home.

The reference which he makes of other matters, till his comming, is in theſe words: *The reſt will I ſet in order when I come.*

15. Thus I have done with the Analyſis and meaning of the Text; now I ſhall come to ſome brief Obſervations, to fit them to our preſent occaſions.

Firſt, then, we may take notice of the Corinthians cuſtome;

for by the whole context it is apparent that they used to come to the Lords supper as to a meale; which the Apostle doth not at all discommend, but only rectifies the abuse of the meale, by which they were fallen into disorderly separations, and excesses of eating as at a common meal, for hunger. This being avoided, all the rest of their practise is allowed, if they did only come preparedly, and to the end for which Christ did appoint this ordinance, which by the primitive institution was appointed to be a holy meale at his table.

Secondly, for the outward manner of celebrating this meale by the Congregation, which is the chief thing we now look after, we may observe these particulars——

1. That the place where they met to eat, was the Church, and not their houses; for *v.* 18. he saith, *when ye come together in the Church.* & *v.* 20. *when ye come together in one place.* Ergo the place was the Church. From whence we may gather, that seeing the proper place of this sacred meale was the Church; the place of their ordinary meales was their private houses, and it was not lawfull for them to take their ordinary meales in the church, but only at their houses; therefore it was not lawfull also to take the Holy meale at their houses, but only in the church, that is, at their publike meeting-place: for the Holy meale appointed for a publike meeting, is no lesse disproportionate to a private house, then an ordinary meale which men take to satisfie nature, is disproportionate to the church of God: *Ergo*, Private communion is not futable to Christs institution; but the Holy meal is appointed to be in a publike place only, which the Apostle calls the Church.

2. From this celebrating of a Meale, and in the Church, and such a meale as was to satisfie their naturall appetite even as they were wont to do in their private houses; we may gather cleerly, that the Table-gesture which the *Corinthians* did use at their ordinary meales wherein they did eat for hunger, was also used in the Church at their celebrating of the Lords supper. For seeing they changed the one into the other, it is not to be questioned but that their gesture was the same in the one as in the other; and consequently, that they sate at the Lords meale, as they did at their own; and if their sitting at the one had been

more reproveable then at the other, no doubt the Apostle would not have left it untouched when he was mentioning their misbehaviours and abuses of the ordinance, professedly, to rectifie the same. So then, their manner of eating as for the gesture, is allowed, not only becaus at this time not reproved, but becaus in the foregoing chap. the Apostle doth expres himself so, as doth cleerly import an allowance of the gesture, in making it parallel to the Table-action used at the Idol-feasts, which in c.8.v.10. he calls *sitting at meat*. So then to receive the Lords supper, as men use to do who sit at their meat, is that which the Church of *Corinth* did practise with the Apostles approbation, and it is that which we ought to imitate in them, and in Christ himself: and consequently Kneeling, either at the table or in the pewes, when the Elements are to be received, is altogether unsutable both to the Primitive institution, and to the Apostolicall observation of this Ordinance.

3. As we have observed here, that the action was a Meale, the place the Church, and the gesture Sitting at meat; so we may further take notice from the expression, *v.*18. & 20. *When ye come together*: and from the commandement, *v.*33. *When ye come together, tarry one for another*; That the whole Congregation was to be joyned in this action of eating a meal. And seeing the meale was to be at a Table, and the Congregation did come together to eat, and that they are commanded to tarry one for another; it is cleer that their custome was, by the Apostles direction, to eat all together of the same bread, at the same table: which doth again shew the unsutableness of eating severally in distinct pewes.

4. As for the time, it is cleerly left free to the will of the congregation; for he saith no more when he mentions their comming together, but this, *When ye come*; leaving it indefinitely to their will and conveniencie, when they should appoint it: whence we may gather that the Church is not bound to the time wherein Christ did celebrate his supper; becaus that circumstance of time was to the Lord necessary to be observed, for the fulfilling of the law of the Passeover to abolish it, and to substitute in the stead thereof the memoriall of his death, which now at all times is to be remembred, as *Heb.*13.15. we are exhorted to do.

And the typicall circumstance of time which was under the law, being fulfilled, we are now absolved from that observance, because the feast which we are to celebrate is a perpetuall feast; 1 *Cor.* 5. 7, 8. and therefore at all times when the Congregation doth think most convenient to meet together to eat, it is observable.

From all which we may gather, that the Apostles did herein appoint the Churches to imitate Christs practise in all things which were proper to the solemnity of a Meale, for the manifestation of the fellowship of those that have a right to partake of it, as united together in the Lord. So then, the neerer we come to this practise, the more we shall be conformable to the will, and answer the intention of Christ in this his Ordinance.

16. Hitherto I have considered Christ and the Apostles practise, and the end and use of the Ordinance unto which their practise was to be subordinate and answerable: but because the Apostle doth referre us in a speciall manner to take notice of Christ himself in this matter, let us look a little directly upon Christs whole aim and purpose in the institution of this ordinance, and that we may do this, the things which in his words and actions do institute and discover his intentions, are to be reflected upon.

First then, the words by which he doth consecrate the bread and wine, are very considerable: *This is my Body which is given for you*; and *this Cup is the New Testament in my Blood which is shed for you*, Luk. 22. 19, 20. by which he sheweth that his purpose was to leave unto his Disciples, in the use of bread and wine, a representation and a pledge of the benefits which by his body and blood were conferred upon their soules: therefore he giveth unto the Bread and Cup the names of that whereof they were memorials, representations and pledges; that by a holy use thereof in Faith, the things remembred and represented thereby might be obtained.

Secondly, the words of Direction instituting the Ordinance for after-times, *Luk.* 22. 19. *Do this in remembrance of me:* which the Apostle doth explain, 1 *Cor.* 11. 6. to be a *shewing of the Lords death till he come*; do manifest that his intention was, that

that they ſhould imitate his practiſe in his laſt Supper, to keep the memory of his death in their mind, till his comming.

Thirdly, there is a word of promiſe relating to his comming again, and to the conjunction of his Diſciples with him in his kingdom. *Mat.*26.29. *I ſay unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the Vine, untill that day when I drink it new with you in my Fathers kingdome.* This promiſe is mentioned alſo, *Mar.* 14. 25. and more generally, in *Luk.*22.16,19. and more diſtinctly, in *verſ.*29, 30. where he promiſeth his diſciples *a Kingdome*, and a priviledge *to eat and drink at his table in his kingdome.* All which doth cleerly intimate, that his intention was by this Ordinance not only to aſſure them of his comming again, but of their ſociety and fellowſhip with him, whereof this Meale was to be an earneſt and demonſtration. So then he did intend that this Feaſt upon the ſacrifice of his Body and Blood, ſhould be unto them not only a means to confirm their Faith in his death, and in the effects thereof in the New Teſtament, as a thing paſt, but alſo of their hope of the ſtate of life to come. So that this Feaſt was appointed to demonſtrate alſo our expectation of the Feaſt which is prepared for thoſe that are to be with the Lambe at his wedding, *Revel.* 19. 9.

Fourthly and laſtly, Chriſts action of *ſerving his Diſciples* at his laſt meale with them, doth ſpeak much of his intention towards them: for he thereby doth not only intend to give them an example of humility, that they ſhould ſerve one another, as he expreſly doth mention (*Joh.*13.12. till 17. & *Luk.*22.27.) that he did ſerve them; but this ſervice at his laſt meale, doth ſpeak them to be his loving friends and familiars, as *Joh.*15.15. he calls them: It doth ſpeak them his gueſts who did ſit at meat at his table, as he declares it *Luk.*22.27. and conſequently it doth manifeſt unto them and us, that his intention was to ſhew forth unto them, and in their perſons ſo entertained by him, to give to all his faithfull ſervants by this Ordinance an aſſurance of the eſteem which he hath of them now, and will have of them for ever in his Kingdome. For elſewhere, viz. *Luk.* 12. 37. there is an expreſſe promiſe made unto all his Faithfull ſervants, aſſuring them of the like entertainment; the words are theſe: *Bleſſed are the ſervants whom the Lord when he commeth ſhall find watching*, (and conſequently faithfull to him in their charges) *Verily I*

ſay

say unto you, that He shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. This then being promised unto all, and performed by the Lord unto his disciples at the last Meale, whereof the remembrance is to be kept by all; is a cleer demonstration, that Christs intention was towards them, and is to all his faithfull disciples, by the solemnity of the action to give us an assurance of his love & esteem of us, that he accounts us as his friends & familiar guests whom he doth honor.

17. From all which, this Conclusion as a generall rule is to be gathered in this matter; Namely,

That manner of Administration of the Lords supper is most warrantable, which doth best expresse and imitate Christ and his Apostles practise in the use of this Ordinance; which doth represent and hold forth most effectually all Christs intentions in it; and which is most fit to accomplish most fully the commandement of celebrating the Memoriall both of his death, and of our conjunction with him at his comming again.

And on the other side, that manner of Administration is least warrantable, which doth not answer and imitate Christ & his Apostles practise in the use of this ordinance; which doth not represent and hold forth any of Christs intentions in it; and which is not at all fitted to accomplish in any competent measure, the commandement of celebrating the memoriall both of his Death, and of our conjunction with him at his comming again.

But it is now made apparent by that which hath been hitherto said, that a Table-gesture in sitting at meat, doth best expresse and imitate Christ and his Apostles practise in the use of this ordinance; That it doth represent and hold forth most effectually all Christs intentions in it; and that it is most fit to accomplish his commandement of celebrating the memorial of his death, and of our conjunction with him at his coming again. And on the other side it hath also been made apparent, that the gesture of Kneeling, or any other behaviour inconsistent with a Table-action, at a meal, is least answerable and proper to all this.

M. SEAM. BRITANNICVM

Therefore it followeth that the Table-gesture of sitting at meat is that manner of Administration of the Lords supper which

is most warrantable; and that the gesture of Kneeling is least warrantable in this Administration.

CHAP. X.

The practise of the best Reformed Churches, in the Administration of the LORD'S *Supper.*

HAving hitherto taken from the Word of GOD, the grounds which make good this Conclusion; I shall adde for a close of this Discourse, a brief Relation of the Practise of the best Reformed Churches; to shew how in their Publike meetings this Ordinance is observed by them, in imitation & remembrance of the Lord.

1. They appoint commonly the Lords day, in the morning, for the time of partaking of the Lords table; and in most places this is done every two moneths once.

2. The Minister, after morning-Sermon, when he hath prayed, and caused the Psalm to be sung, and dismissed those that are not to partake; doth speak by way of Exhortation to those that are to come to the Ordinance; declaring the institution thereof, the benefits to be received by the worthy partakers in it, and the danger of unworthy partaking: whereupon the impenitent and scandalous are warned not to presume to approch unto the table.

3. This Exhortation is by some delivered in the Pulpit, by some at the Table it self; by some it is read out of a Book wherein the Conceived form by the Church is contained; by others it is not read, but delivered in a free discourse: for although they have Forms, yet they do not strictly bind their Ministers to them.

4. There is a Table, before the beginning of the Sermon, covered with a clean cloth upon it; and at the end where the Minister is to sit, the bread and wine is set prepared, to be consecrated by him.

5. When the Minister hath ended the Exhortation preparatory to the action; before the consecration of the Elements he giveth thanks, and prayeth unto God for a blessing upon the Ordinance, and upon those that do partake of it. This prayer is made at the Table, whiles the Minister is there alone; the prayer being ended, he invites the Communicants to approach orderly without noise and confusion.

6. The

6. The Elders and Deacons, in most places, partake first with the Minister; and when these have received, they rise and serve the tables, which afterward are filled.

7. According to the bigness of the Congregation, and the conveniencie of the place, the Table is made longer or shorter, and Forms are set on each side thereof at a convenient distance, for people to sit, and to go in and out, and they are ordered by the Elders to go in at the one end of the Table on each side, and out at the other, every one following his neighbour; and as every one doth approach, he giveth unto the Elder standing at the side of the Table whereat he enters, his Token.

8. At every time the Table is filled, the Minister doth repeat the words of Consecration used by *Christ*, or the Apostle *Paul*, or to that effect; and distributeth first the Bread, on both hands, to those that sit next unto him; and then doth shove the Vessell which containeth the consecrated bread, unto the rest along the Table as they sit in order, every one taking of it as it comes before him a morsell; and the Elders of each side stand behind the Communicants to shove the Vessell along the Table, for the quicker dispatch of the action, and to bring up the Vessell from the lower to the upper end where the Minister doth sit, when all have eaten of the bread that is in it.

9. The Bread being distributed, the Cup in like manner is consecrated, and given by the Minister on each hand one cup, to go all along from one to another; every one when he hath tasted of the wine, setting it down upon the table before his neighbour, and he taking it up, drinking of it, and setting it down again; and when all have drunk, the Elders carry up the Cups to the end where the Minister sits, and set them filled before him; and a Blessing being prononnced upon each Table-full, the Communicants rise in order, and go to their seats, and another Table-full doth come in their room, till all have received.

10. The men come first in order, & then the women to partake.

11. There is a Bason held or set in some place, at the end of the table, where the people come in or goe out, to receive a collection for the poor. 12. When all have received, the last Table-full doth sit stil at the table until the Minister be gone up again to the Pulpit, to give thanks to God for all, and to dismisse the Congregation with a blessing.

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